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Reverend George Leon Walker,  
D. D., 1830-1900 ;















*Geo. Levi Walker.*

REVEREND  
GEORGE LEON WALKER, D.D.

1830-1900



HARTFORD, CONN.  
1900  
[PRIVATELY PRINTED]

The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, Printers.

I.

MEMORIAL SKETCH AND TRIBUTES.







*From the Hartford Courant of March 14, 1900.*

[BY WILLISTON WALKER.]

DR. GEORGE LEON WALKER passed peacefully away at four o'clock this (Wednesday) morning at the Walker home on Prospect street. There were gathered about the bedside when the end came the doctor's son, Prof. Williston Walker, and his wife; the doctor's brother, Dr. Henry F. Walker of New York; their sister, Mrs. Boardman, and her husband, Professor George N. Boardman. The immediate cause of death was a severe attack of pneumonia, which had come as a second attack after a previous illness, from which he rallied.

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The Rev. Dr. GEORGE LEON WALKER, whose death occurred this morning, came of sturdy New England ancestry. He was eighth in descent from Richard Walker, who settled at Lynn, Mass., in 1630, fought in the early Indian wars, and was a member both of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of London and of its Boston namesake. His great-grandfather, Phineas, of Woodstock, Conn., was a soldier in the Old French and Revolutionary wars. His grandfather, Leonard, like many another son of Connecticut, emi-

grated to Vermont just as the eighteenth century came to a close, and settled at Strafford. His father, Charles, born before the emigrant left the Woodstock home, graduated at Andover Theological Seminary in 1821, and married Lucretia Ambrose, daughter of Stephen Ambrose of Concord, N. H., a woman of unusual talents, whom the subject of this sketch was markedly to resemble in character and features.

The Rev. Charles Walker was settled at Rutland in the first pastorate of a ministry conspicuous for more than half a century in Vermont when his second son, George Leon, was born on April 30, 1830. The changes frequently incident to ministerial service took the father to Brattleboro when George was four years old, and that town in which he was to live till his seventeenth year was always dear to him as his boyhood home. The early education of the boy was in the schools of Brattleboro, and he was accustomed in later life to recall with pleasure the inspiration he drew from the teaching of a young master of the village high school, afterward eminent as a librarian of the Boston Public Library, the Hon. Mellen Chamberlain. But the boy's home, with its intellectual and earnest parents and its four keen-minded children — three brothers and a sister — was the most fruitful early influence that came to him. A pastorate of twelve years duration at Brattleboro was followed by the removal of the father to Pittsford, Vermont, which thenceforth became the family residence.

It was the boy's ambition to go to college; but even before leaving Brattleboro, a spinal curvature from which he was to suffer all his days had developed, and his prospect of life seemed so precarious that the col-

lege course had to be forborne. To one of Mr. Walker's energy and strength of will, however, such a deprivation was a challenge rather than a deterrent ; and the studies which he would have pursued had he been able to obtain the coveted college training were followed out alone, so that he acquired not merely a knowledge of Greek and Latin, but a very thorough acquaintance with philosophy, mathematics, and especially with English literature, toward which his mind was always strongly drawn. The classic English poets, most of all, were the companionship and delight of his youth and early manhood.

In 1850, an appointment as clerk in the Massachusetts State House, procured by an uncle, the Hon. Amasa Walker, brought the young man a change of scene ; and the next three years were spent in Boston in the duties of his office and in the vigorous study of law during all leisure moments, for Mr. Walker was then determined to make the legal profession his own. These plans were rudely interrupted. A change in the political control of the state cost him his clerkship, and a subsequent attack of typhoid fever deprived him for some months of the use of his eyes and left a more permanent witness of its inroads on his feeble frame in a lameness that necessitated the use of crutches for several years. The young student of law went back to the Pittsford home, in broken health, his prospects frustrated, and his friends discouraged. But he had attained to one certainty in his own mind. He was determined, if possible, to become a minister ; and, to this end, as soon as strength permitted, he began to study theology with the aid of his father's library. His fondness for English literature also continued, and

he labored on a poem of considerable length. The work, though too introspective and reflective of the emotions of this trying epoch to make Mr. Walker ever willing to have it published, showed an unusual skill in the mastery of expression and a genuine poetic feeling. This lengthened period of feebleness and disappointment, though it failed to break Mr. Walker's courage, left its impress in a sense of the seriousness and the struggle of life, and of the nearness of its sorrows to its joys, upon him always.

On August 31, 1857, Mr. Walker was licensed to preach by the Rutland, Vermont, Association; and, soon after, entered Andover Theological Seminary as a "resident licentiate," studying in that institution for a year. A chance opportunity to take the place as pulpit supply of a professor incapacitated by illness led to a call to the pastorate of the State Street Church in Portland, one of the most important in the commonwealth of Maine. On September 16, 1858, Mr. Walker married Maria Williston, daughter of Nathan Birdseye Williston of Brattleboro, Vt., and on the 13th of the following October he was ordained to his new charge.

The time of his pastorate was eventful. Most actively of any of the Portland ministers he espoused the union and the anti-slavery causes in the discussions preceding the civil war, and at the cost of considerable criticism: but his remarkable power in the pulpit and his ready sympathy and helpfulness with all in suffering and bereavement speedily won him the affection of the Portland congregation in a marked degree. Here two sons were born to him, Williston on July 1, 1860, and Charles Ambrose, on September 27, 1861, the latter

dying on July 22, 1869; and here, on August 31, 1865, he lost his wife by diphtheria. The death of his wife and his own exertions in connection with the great Portland fire of July 4, 1866, broke down his never robust health. By the spring of 1867 he was once more on crutches and compelled to return to his father's home at Pittsford. It being evident that his ill-health would be somewhat protracted, his people reluctantly released him from the Portland pastorate on October 21, 1867.

A year later when somewhat improved in health, but while still obliged to use crutches and to preach sitting in a chair, Mr. Walker was invited to supply the pulpit of the First Church in New Haven, Connecticut, from which the Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon had then recently retired. As a consequence, he was settled over his new charge on November 18, 1868. Here his ministry met with great acceptance, as at Portland,—a favor that was witnessed by the bestowal upon him of the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Yale University in 1870. On September 15, of the year last mentioned, Dr. Walker married Amelia Read Larned of New Haven, daughter of George Larned of Thompson, Connecticut.

But, though conspicuously successful in his chosen vocation and greatly attached to the people of New Haven, Dr. Walker soon found that he had been unwise in assuming the burdens of the pastorate once more before his health had been fully re-established, and, on May 19, 1873, he had to relinquish the pulpit for a second time. From October, 1873, to November, 1874, Dr. Walker sought renewed strength in Europe, living chiefly at Stuttgart and Rome. At the close of

the year 1874 he returned to Brattleboro, Vt. For the next four years he dwelt with his father-in-law, Mr. Williston, in the town of his boyhood home, in the house in which he was accustomed to spend the summer thereafter as long as he lived. During much of these four years of continuous residence at Brattleboro, from October, 1875, to January, 1878, he acted as pastor of the Centre Congregational Church of that place, without ever being formally inducted into its pastorate.

From Brattleboro Dr. Walker was called, early in 1879, to the First Church of this city, and was installed in its ministry on February 27. The time of his coming was one of considerable significance in the history of this ancient Church. The shifting of the population which was to make its situation essentially "downtown" had begun to affect the congregation, a considerable debt rested upon the Society, and a strong and moulding leadership was desirable. Under Dr. Walker's efforts the debt was speedily paid, the house of worship renovated, a new organ procured by the gift of a generous member of the Church, and a renewed interest and pride awakened in its history especially through the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the installation of its first ministers in October, 1883. In connection with that event Dr. Walker prepared a most painstaking and valuable "History of the First Church" that was published in a volume of five hundred and fifteen pages in 1884. Assured early of the respect and affection of his congregation, Dr. Walker grew to a position of influence in the city, especially in what concerned the preservation of its memories, illustrated, to specify

a single instance, in his interest in the rescue of the ancient burying-ground and the associated Gold street improvement.

In the larger affairs of the Congregational body Dr. Walker was a recognized leader. Thus, he served as one of the commission of twenty-five that prepared what has been generally known from the year of its publication as the "Creed of 1883," now widely accepted as a statement of Congregational belief. In 1885, at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, he preached the commemorative sermon. The doctrinal discussions which turmoiled the Board aroused his interest and enlisted his participation as an advocate of moderation, notably at the meetings of the board at Springfield in 1887 and at New York in 1889; and led to his appointment, in the year last mentioned, as chairman of the "Committee of Nine" which formulated the altered policy now pursued by the Board in making missionary appointments. From 1887 to 1899 he was one of the corporation of Yale University. In 1888 he became a member of the "Board of Visitors" of Andover Theological Seminary — an office which he held till his complete disability compelled its relinquishment in 1897, being during the latter part of his incumbency the president of that Board. As a "Visitor" he had to pass upon the concluding features of the trial of President Egbert C. Smyth and the questions raised by the Andover theology.

In all the controversies in which he was engaged Dr. Walker showed himself a fearless, incisive debater; but he carried a judicial mind and an irenic spirit, so that his judgment was widely trusted and his wisdom



generally acknowledged. And, as he grew in age, without abating a whit of his fire and energy of conviction, his sympathies steadily broadened and his spirit sweetened, so that those who were his sharpest opponents in controversy were largely won to personal friendship.

Dr. Walker's Hartford pastorate, though a period of health compared with his earlier ministry, was not without its serious physical disadvantages. In him the spirit dominated over the flesh, as when just before preaching a discourse commemorative of the Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon, at New Haven, in 1882, he broke his leg by a fall on an icy pavement, yet insisted on performing the appointed service seated in a chair. His disabilities interfered with his work less than similar impairments of strength might have with many; but they were always felt as a serious burden. A journey to Carlsbad, Austria, in 1886, brought him some improvement; but a tendency to attacks of *angina pectoris* at length attained to such severity and frequency that on June 12, 1892, he was compelled to lay down the pastoral charge of the First Church altogether, though retaining the title of *pastor emeritus* and performing occasional service as strength permitted him. A year before his resignation, in 1891, he published a life of Thomas Hooker; and after his retirement he gave himself more than ever to historical studies, especially to the investigation of New England religious history, in which he had always had a deep interest. The fruit of these labors was embodied in a series of lectures on "Aspects of the Religious Life of New England," which he gave before the Hartford Theological Seminary in the winter of 1896. These were



published in 1897 in a volume that has met with decided acceptance.

On August 22, 1896, at his summer home in Brattleboro, Dr. Walker was stricken with apoplexy, resulting in a complete deprivation of speech and an almost total paralysis of his right side. These disabilities continued to the end. His mental clearness was not impaired. He continued to enjoy meeting his friends, and the reading of books. He followed with keen interest the course of public events as narrated in the daily press. In his wheeled chair he has been a familiar figure on our streets. A great blow came to him in the death of his devoted wife on October 30, 1898; but he bore his trials and limitations with singular courage and patience, till he was set free from his long imprisonment by the angel of death. In all the vicissitudes of his lot he showed himself the strong, brave, Christian man.

Dr. Walker was a man of a good deal of natural shyness and reserve of manner. Forced to husband his time and strength by reason of illness, especially in early life, he had less inclination than many toward the pleasures of social intercourse. But to any in anxiety, sorrow, or personal suffering, his sympathies went out in a full measure that made his ministrations always welcomed, and rendered him beloved by those to whom he thus showed himself. In his family he was a man of warm affection. In all benevolent causes he was interested and generous. His tastes were strongly attracted in several artistic directions. He had much acquaintance with engravings, and was, in a very modest degree, a collector of prints. He knew much of colonial furniture, and loved to finish or repair an antique

piece with his own hands. He was interested in colonial literature, especially that which bore on the history of Congregationalism, and collected an excellent working library on the theme. He wrote readily and well, and published, besides the three volumes already indicated, a large number of sermons, papers, and articles.

Dr. Walker was undoubtedly at his best in the pulpit. With few of the characteristic graces of the orator, he had the rare faculty of being able always to make men listen to what he had to say. His message invariably bore the stamp of earnestness, directness, and conviction. Its form was fresh and striking, its development clear and convincing. And through the sermon there ran a vein of feeling, sometimes of pathos, sometimes of entreaty, always of positive faith, which touched the heart of the hearer no less than the matter of the discourse appealed to the intellect.

Dr. Walker is survived by a son, Professor Williston Walker of the Theological Seminary; by a brother, Henry F. Walker, M.D., a physician of prominence in New York City, and by a sister, Mrs. Anne W. Boardman, the wife of Professor George N. Boardman, long the occupant of the chair of Systematic Theology in Chicago Theological Seminary.

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*From the Hartford Courant of March 17, 1900.*

The funeral of the Rev. Dr. George Leon Walker, *pastor emeritus* of the Center Church, was held in that church yesterday afternoon, at 3.30 o'clock, after prayers by the Rev. Melancthon W. Jacobus, D.D., acting pastor, at his late home on Prospect street. The service was characterized by a simple dignity, and

was very impressive. The pulpit platform was heavily set with palms and ferns, and from the desk from which Dr. Walker had preached so many times, there depended an array of lilies, and just below a large shower of white roses, while at the north entrance to the pulpit stairs a large cluster wreath of pink roses completed the floral setting. A large audience of parishioners and many well-known public men of the city were present.

The service opened with the processional, led by the Rev. Dr. Jacobus, reciting the lines, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," the choir chanting the antiphonal responses. Following him were the Rev. Dr. E. P. Parker of the South Congregational Church and the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church, who assisted in the service; the ushers, J. Coolidge Hills and Frank G. Smith, and the honorary bearers, Dr. Henry P. Stearns, Rowland Swift, Daniel R. Howe, Dr. George R. Shepherd, Wilbur F. Gordy, and Solon P. Davis. The casket was covered with loose bouquets of ferns and lilies of the valley, and was borne on the shoulders of six colored porters, and following were the family, friends, and representatives of the Center Church.

The Rev. Dr. E. P. Parker invoked the Divine blessing, the choir sang "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," Dr. Parker reading selected passages from the Scriptures. The choir sang "O Love Divine, That Stooped to Share," and the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell offered prayer, at the close of which the body was removed from the church, the choir singing "For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest." Benediction by the Rev. Dr. Jacobus closed the church services.

*From the Hartford Telegram of March 17, 1900.*

The funeral services of the Rev. Dr. George Leon Walker began with prayers at the house, No. 46 Prospect street, at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, only relatives and intimate friends of the dead preacher being present. Prayers were offered by Professor Jacobus, acting pastor of the church, after which the remains were taken to the Center Church for the public funeral.

The services at the church, which was filled with its members and friends of the dead pastor, were begun with the funeral chant given responsively by the choir and Prof. Jacobus. The prayer of invocation was offered by the Rev. Dr. Parker of the South Church, followed by the hymn, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," by the choir. The scriptural selections were read by Dr. Parker. Dr. Holmes' hymn, "O Love Divine, that Stooped to Share," was sung, followed by the closing prayer by the Rev. J. H. Twichell of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church. While the last hymn, "For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest," was sung, the remains were borne from the church. The benediction was pronounced by Professor Jacobus.

The family and a delegation from the church will accompany Dr. Walker's remains to Brattleboro, Vt., for interment, leaving on the 8.04 train, this morning. Relatives who were present at the funeral were Dr. Henry F. Walker of New York, the brother of the doctor; Professor and Mrs. George N. Boardman of Chicago, Mrs. Boardman being the sister; Miss Mary M. Walker of Northampton, Mass., cousin; Ambrose Eastman, Esq., of Boston, cousin; Colonel D. R.

Larned of Washington, D. C., brother of the late Mrs. Walker; Mrs. Edgar Sherman and daughter, Miss Mary R. Sherman, of New York, sister and niece of Mrs. Walker; William R. Howe, Esq., of Orange, N. J., nephew of Mrs. Walker; Mr. Robert Walker of New York, the Hon. and Mrs. Francis Wayland of New Haven.

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*An Editorial published in The Congregationalist of  
March 22, 1900.*

Probably the impression which Dr. Walker made upon most people at first was that of positiveness of character. No one could talk with him two minutes without comprehending that he had definite convictions and was accustomed to assert them frankly. He had the gift of clearness also. Knowing exactly what he believed, he uttered himself so lucidly that no one continued in doubt unless he meant to leave uncertainty, and then no doubt of that fact remained. He also seemed to be, and was, intensely in earnest. To him life, duty, and influence were serious things, responsibility for which, although not an oppressive burden, none the less was never to be forgotten or disregarded.

These characteristics, when they accompany such signal, and in some respects unusual, natural ability as his, inevitably render their possessor a leader among men, and this he was conspicuously. Although remarkably free from the spirit of self-seeking, he accepted readily such responsibilities as naturally fell to him, and his sagacity and efficiency were so fruitful that his services to the church and the world, great and valuable although they were, doubtless would have been multiplied largely had not his physical frailty pro-

hibited. Indeed, it is surprising that one, much of whose life was a prolonged fight for health, should have left such a record of important and diversified service.

No one should think of Dr. Walker, however, as lacking the more winning qualities. He could be sharp and severe. He was not to be provoked with impunity. Yet he was as tender and gentle as he was fearless and outspoken. He won love as easily as respect. Although his lack of robustness limited him more than most men to domestic enjoyments, there were few more companionable men, few who contributed more to the genuine, appropriate pleasure of any social occasion which he could attend. In this as in everything else he had a high ideal, and for that very reason he leaves a more precious memory. He was notably considerate and helpful towards the young, especially young ministers, to whom a few words out of his long experience always gave courage, and rarely failed to add illumination.

In his successive pastorates he won reputation as among the freshest, most forcible, and successful of preachers. In the wider field of denominational work he was a conceded leader. He was concerned prominently in the leading controversies of our last twenty years, but with no impairment of his repute for wisdom, fairness, or kindness. As a historical scholar and author he also made an honorable name. Although he has been withdrawn from active life for several years, lingering in the twilight of life until his earthly sun should set, he has not been, nor will he be, forgotten. A great and good, an honored and beloved leader has been called away from us.

*A Letter of Rev. Dr. Edwin Pond Parker, of the Second Church, Hartford, to the Hartford Times of March 14, 1900.*

The departure of Dr. George Leon Walker from these earthly scenes is another public bereavement added to those which this community has recently sustained. Although his residence in Hartford had not been of long duration, it had been long enough to enable him to identify himself with our public interests, to put himself at the head of his brethren in the Gospel ministry here, and to win the respect, the reverence, and the affection of our people generally. Although for the last four years he has been withdrawn from all participation in public affairs, he has not been withdrawn from the fond and tender regard which his character and services had secured for himself, but has been the object of an ever-deepening love and sympathy.

Perhaps no one now living in Hartford has so long known him as I have. When I was a student in Bangor Theological Seminary, he came to the pastorate of the State Street Church in Portland, Me., and circumstances which led me frequently to Portland at that period, brought me also into some personal acquaintance with him. At that time his peculiar power as a preacher was fully recognized, and no minister in Maine stood higher in the estimation of his brethren and of the churches. His solid, sound, sterling, intellectual qualities were then, as ever since, combined with such a sincerity, depth, seriousness, and earnestness of character, as made all his public utterances both interesting, engaging, instructive, and impressive. It need not be said that, as he grew in years and in



experience, he grew in wisdom and grace and power, broadening and ripening and mellowing through the summer and autumn of his life; but his distinguishing qualities of mind and character were as conspicuous in the earlier years of his public ministry as in the later. He never attempted to live or act or speak up to the convictions of other men, but up to his own well-considered and settled convictions. He was immovable in what seemed to him right and best. He was courteous, but frank and courageous and explicit in the expression of his opinions and beliefs.

I think he was particularly distinguished for the *clarity* of his thought and of its expression. The stream of his discourse was always perfectly pellucid. Dr. Burton, who became very fond of Dr. Walker, once said to me of him: "His thinking is as clear-cut and definite as if stamped with a die."

His literary art always reminded me of fine etchings. This, with just a touch here and there of soft color, supplied from a chastened imagination, made his thoughtful discourse or essay a thing of quiet beauty. It was all so clear, pure, luminous, and instinct with earnest feeling.

Just this clarity, this purity, this tenderness of feeling, this color of beauty, this severity of simplicity, touched all the while with subdued emotion, which were so noticeable in his writings, were no less noticeable in all his more private communications. They were grounded in his nature and character. "The style was the man." They who only saw and heard Dr. Walker in the pulpit and only knew him as a preacher, might have misjudged a prevailing seriousness and even solemnity of aspect and manner. He



had a holy horror of the sort of wit with which some ministers — usually destitute of real wit or humor — endeavor to enliven their discourses. At an installation service here in Hartford, when a brother minister was lugging into his talk sundry vain endeavors after jocosity, he said to me, groaning with pain, "Oh, Parker, can we never be rid of these wretched attempts to be witty on such occasions!" But, at the proper time and occasion, Dr. Walker could be deliciously humorous. No one more quickly saw or more cordially appreciated the humorous aspect of things. He was delightful in conversation, genial, suggestive, witty, and sympathetic.

Last November the General Conference of the Congregational churches of Connecticut was held in the Park Church of this city. At the afternoon session, Dr. Walker was present, for he dearly loved his professional brethren.

He was wheeled up the side aisle in the chair that so many will remember, to a position not far from the pulpit. When attention was called to his presence, at a given signal, the whole congregation, chiefly composed of clergymen, rose together and stood for a few moments, in token of their respect and love for the dear, the pure, the good man, whom they all, I believe, gladly and gratefully acknowledged as the "chief among them."

In the long line of ministers who have served in the pastorate of the First Church in this city, Thomas Hooker stands first and foremost, I suppose. In my opinion Dr. George Leon Walker stands next to him in the rank of greatness.

It is with joy in his deliverance out of strangely-

ordered infirmities, but with deep sorrow that we shall see his dear face no more here, that we bid him — a brother greatly beloved — farewell! E. P. P.

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*Extract from a Sermon by Dr. Parker published in the Hartford Courant for March 26, 1900.*

Dr. Parker's sermon at the South Church yesterday morning was on the words in which St. Paul describes himself, in his Roman captivity, as a "prisoner of the Lord." The general thought of the discourse was that Christian men and women are by no means cut off from the possibility of service and usefulness by the various disabilities which may befall them in the course of faithful living — disabilities which are often as great as if they were those of outward constraint. Dr. Parker said :

"It may be pardonable to cite a case familiar to many of you, which strikingly illustrates my interpretation of this phrase. It is now nearly four years since Dr. Walker was suddenly and mysteriously arrested, as by the touch of an unseen authority, and imprisoned. His imprisonment was a strict and disabling one. There was a chain upon his limbs, there were fetters upon his lips. His disabilities were, in many respects, far greater than those of St. Paul.

"But was that dear man of God a useless Christian through those years of restraint and limitation? Was he without influence and power in this community during that period of confinement? Just because he was all the while 'the prisoner of the Lord,' believing himself to be such, and behaving himself as such, there was a dignity and distinction, as well as pathos,

in his condition that effectually appealed to men and women. Power was with him, and went forth from him, and benediction. Light streamed forth from his comparatively solitary life, and the influence of his faith and courage and patience was continually and widely felt in our city and elsewhere; so that, when at last he was released and removed, it was universally felt that Hartford had sustained a distinct bereavement in his departure. He was continually saying, inaudibly but effectually, 'I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;' and perhaps that mute, pathetic, dignified ministrations of his was as powerful as any preaching of the word from any pulpit in this city."

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*A Sketch entitled "George Leon Walker in Hartford," by Rev. Joseph H. Twichell, of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Hartford, in the Congregationalist of March 29, 1900.*

Within little more than half a year the ancient mother church of Hartford has been bereaved of both its ministers. August 8 died Dr. Lamson. On the 14th of the present month Dr. Walker, *pastor emeritus* since 1892, when failing health enforced his retirement from active service, also fell asleep. By both events our general community was affected with an unusual sorrow and sense of loss. In the circumstances of the leave-taking in the two cases there was, however, a great contrast. Dr. Lamson's call hence was most sudden and unprepared for. For four years Dr. Walker had lain in a feeble and helpless condition expecting the

hour of his departure, which he and all knew could not be far off.

When in a moment Dr. Lamson was gone, we woke to consider, as, naturally, we had not done before, what we thought of him, how large his worth in our esteem and how high his deserved place in our affection. But during the long period in which Dr. Walker, and ourselves with him, were in waiting for his release, we had time to reflect much upon him and to discover the impression of himself — of his gifts, his character, his work — which he had made upon us, and our feelings about him altogether as the result of the previous thirteen years of his fellowship with us.

One conclusion we reached in consequence, in which we were united, was that declared by Dr. Parker, for forty years honored pastor of our Second Church, when, in a communication to the *Hartford Times*, the day that Dr. Walker left us, he wrote: "In the long line of ministers who have served in the pastorate of the First Church in this city, Thomas Hooker stands first and foremost, I suppose. In my opinion, Dr. George Leon Walker stands next to him in the rank of greatness." That was, indeed, saying a great deal, but it was a judgment from a highly competent source, soberly pronounced, and probably will stand.

From the time of his settlement in Hartford Dr. Walker passed in a remarkable manner into sympathy and communion with its historic memories, and particularly under fascination of the personality of his mighty predecessor. No one beside had ever done so much to illumine the work achieved by Hooker in his day and to exalt his title to lasting renown as, incidentally to the quarter-millennial of the old church in 1883, did he.

For intellectual power and independence conjoined with virile force of spirit, he was himself distinctly of the masterful type.

In matters on which a course was to be taken, it was eminently characteristic of him to think for himself, to work out his own result, and in simple, unconscious courage to order his position accordingly. Of this his memorable sermon at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Board in 1885, and the part he bore in the strenuous debates that occurred at some of its subsequent meetings, were illustrations.

But here in Hartford we had already learned that he was a strong man of just that sort, whose mind was his own, and who, where his convictions were concerned, did not shrink from the initiative. To be sure, he came to us in his mature prime and as a man of established reputation, yet, even so, it was extraordinary how soon he obtained in our community at large the deference accorded to those felt to be of competent judgment in affairs and wise in counsel.

In a singularly graceful and appreciative published tribute to Dr. Lamson at the time of his death, Dr. Samuel Hart, an eminent Episcopal clergyman, then professor in Trinity College, speaking of the place that, in the brief period of his residence in the city, he had won in the public regard, said :

“ Dr. Lamson’s predecessor in the pastorate had gained an almost unique position among us. I think that in some way we expect one who holds that pastorate to be our first citizen, taking the lead in matters which have to do with the religious and moral welfare of the community, and holding for it a real connection with all its past history. . . . . Dr. Walker is still

among us, and we hope that he knows how universally he is recognized as a man of leading position and influence among us, how gladly we recognize all that we owe to him, and how strong a hold he has upon our affections.”

Few, I am confident, will challenge the justice of the statement that no minister of any Hartford church in modern times has carried the measure of weight as a citizen that George Leon Walker did — Horace Bushnell alone excepted.

With this strong man came to us a strong preacher, upon which fact there is small need to dwell, for the knowledge of it is not confined to Hartford. Intellectually, his pulpit work was of a very rare order of excellence. His sermons were abundantly mixed with brains. There was always a thoughtfulness and an ability in his handling of his subject that compelled the respect of his hearer, whoever he might be. Moreover, in point of literary art, his preaching was of a quality equally rare. His style was marvelously lucid and incisive, and exhaled the flavors of culture. Professor Lounsbury, Yale's most distinguished English scholar, who was wont often to hear him during his pastorate in New Haven, once told me that more than any other preacher he had ever listened to he revealed in his use of language intimacy of acquaintance with the English classics; that not infrequently he could identify the very mine from which the choice gold of his speech had been extracted.

But these things concern the secondary elements of his pulpit power only. The principal secret of his effect as a minister of the divine Word of course lay deeper — in the intense conviction of the evangelical

truth with which he was penetrated. He believed, therefore he spoke. Regarding him, at least, it was never by any surmised that he did not wholly mean what he said, or that he was keeping back some part of what he thought. His veracity was of the kind that could be felt, and he was transparently fearless.

In the extract cited from the pen of Dr. Hart there is reference to the hold Dr. Walker gained on our affections. A very strong hold indeed, it was, and, it may be allowed, unexpectedly so. Whoever was thrown in with him in the ways of life casually, or only a few times, must probably have judged him rather unlikely — less likely than most, perhaps — to inspire attachment in private social relations. His manner was uncommonly reserved and distant. While this was, doubtless, to some extent due to the ill-health with which from his youth he had contended, it must presumably have been also of his constitutional make. He was naturally undemonstrative. During the five years of his New Haven pastorate, we of Hartford, though we had not infrequently met him, had none of us grown into anything more than half acquaintance with him. And when he entered our circle we expected that, though he was a great addition to us, we should find him socially somewhat indigestible, which we did for a time, but only for a time. It did not take us long to discover that this inexpressive man was as full of the milk of human kindness as he could hold. Little by little, in ways fondly remembered but that it would be difficult to describe, it leaked out that under that severe seeming outside beat a heart of unbounded out-flowing good will and of most generous, appreciative sympathy.



I can never forget how, going one day into the study of the late Dr. Burton — ever and to this hour dearly beloved — I was hailed with: “I’m glad you’ve come in! I’ve got something to show you — a note from Walker!” Dr. Burton had just preached the sermon at the funeral of our revered neighbor, Rev. Myron N. Morris of West Hartford, and the note, which he proceeded to read to me, was one Dr. Walker had written to say how thankful to him he was for the manner in which he had opened the theme of that good man’s virtues. It was extremely cordial in its tone, and it ended thus: “What a pity there are so few of whom such things can be said, and only one man who can say them.”

“Twichell!” exclaimed Dr. Burton, slapping the note down upon the table, “a Frenchman couldn’t beat it!”

Well, in short, by one token and another, we were presently made aware that in our new associate was a plenitude of the paternal sentiment toward every one of us, and we all fell in love with him — the more deeply by reaction from our first impression of him. And so it went on thenceforward, our love ever growing, till at last, while he lingered stricken amongst us, called of his Heavenly Father to endure the long, weary trial of strange affliction, it mounted to an infinite, yearning tenderness. A soul wealthier by nature and by grace in the tempers of gentleness and fellow feeling and magnanimity than he had never been vouchsafed to our companionship.

His sympathies and his compassions were wide-ranging, and, though he confessedly had a peculiar skill in ministering the consolations of the faith to



broken hearts, were not confined to humanity. It was a beautiful disclosure of his inward character and life—of his religion, and as well a notable event in the Christian annals of Hartford—his preaching, as he did in 1891, a splendid sermon, full of pathos and marked by all his felicities in discourse, on the duties we owe to dumb animals. This sermon, entitled by him *Our Humble Associates*, was afterward published as a tract by our Connecticut Humane Society and has since been distributed by the thousand, nor is it the least worthy monument of its author.

The quality of mercy was ingrained in his spirit. If I may be permitted another personal reminiscence— it was in June, 1895, (so my note-book tells me,) that I went to him on the unwelcome errand of asking him to give me the facts relative to a certain man's misdeed in the somewhat remote past, with which fact, he, as pastor, had been acquainted. I explained the reason of my request—that it was not a private one, but official and compulsory. He heard me through, was silent for a minute or two, and then, with more emotion than I had ever seen him manifest before, answered: "Yes, I know all about it, but, Twichell, I will not tell it to you or to anybody. That wrong was repented of and forgiven, and I will do nothing to impart the knowledge of it, or to keep the memory of it alive."

He, however, undertook himself to speak a word in a certain quarter, whereby the object of my coming to him would be served. As I was leaving and we stood in the door, he said, in a softened but very earnest tone: "What should you and I do if there wasn't any forgiveness of sins?"

What wonder that this scene, witness of the thoughts

in which he lived before God, has remained with me from that time as representative of the man, and that it came back to me when I looked on his dead face.

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*A tribute by Professor George Nye Boardman, of Chicago Theological Seminary, published in the Necrology of Andover Theological Seminary.*

Dr. Walker was a person of marked individuality from his youth. His tall, slender form, his flushed cheeks and otherwise pallid face indicated physical frailty not needing interpretation. From the age of sixteen it seemed almost certain that pulmonary disease had fastened upon him. It was really chronic pleurisy, from which he was never wholly free. It was at this time that he turned his attention to the subject of religion, and in 1848 united with his father's church at Pittsford. His religious experience was of a somewhat melancholic hue, fostered by the *Imitatio Christi* and such like books. Later, a typhoid fever left him with a lameness that was never entirely overcome. In after times, on occasions of depressed health, he was forced to resort to his crutches, and sometimes in preaching, notably at New Haven, to occupy a seat prepared for him in the pulpit. The four years succeeding his stay in Boston were spent mostly at his father's home. This was the period of his special intellectual culture. Continually threatened with lung disease, often moving about with crutch and cane, he delved year after year, reading the poets and acquiring that mastery of the English language which enabled him to marshal words in such a way as to make them servants of his thought and will.

Very soon after his settlement as a pastor he developed qualities besides those of a preacher which attracted attention. He was a citizen as well as a minister. He sent forth ringing utterances in the Civil War, and took active part in questions concerning public schools. He was often called upon to take part in important councils and in measures and movements connected with home and foreign missions. . . . On a review of his life, his character, as a whole, stands out before the minds of his friends with great distinctness. They are impressed with the power of his intellect, especially its quick and accurate intuitions; with the power of his imagination, imparting fervid life to historic scenes as well as natural objects; with his acute æsthetic sensibility; with his persistency in purpose and effort; and with the dominant good sense that controlled all his actions. But when all things are considered—the illnesses of early life, the interruptions because of physical infirmities in his professional career, those last three and a half years of disablement from locomotion and speech—his friends are impressed most of all, perhaps, by his courageous and patient endurance.

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*From a letter by its Hartford correspondent in the Springfield Republican of March 18, 1900.*

Dr. George Leon Walker, who died Wednesday morning, was too large and fine an intellect to be valued at his real worth by most of those with whom he came in contact. Dr. Parker, in a really admirable article on him, has spoken particularly of the clarity

of his thought. Fully sympathizing with that recognition of a distinguishing quality, I am inclined to place his sanity even higher. He was judicious, in the large sense, not always in trifles, because he attached no more importance to them than the law does to the things it includes in the phrase *de minimis*. He came very near to being Goethe's "self-poised" man. Add that he was a genuinely good man, and a kindly, with an intellect as acute as it was solid, and you have the elements of a really remarkable character. That he gained the distinction he did was merely incidental to his doing his own work in his own way. Had he sought much more he would have attained it, but he might not have been so large a man.

II.

VERSES.





Dr. Walker, in early manhood, especially during his sojourn in Boston and his years of convalescence and study in his father's home at Pittsford, gave much attention to writing verse—a form of expression which he abandoned after entering on the exacting labors of the pastorate. The following stanzas, all written in the period from his twenty-second to his twenty-eighth year, are here printed as illustrative of his love of nature and of his Christian faith.

“NOW THE DROWSY YEAR AWAKENS.”

Once more earth's mighty enginery has roll'd  
Round her far pathway, worn with ages old,  
The wheeling sphere. Not with thundering sound,  
Jarring discord, but through the vast profound  
Of desert, void, illimitable space,  
Pealing music, till on the dial face  
Of time, the bounding Spring proclaims again  
The glad resumption of her gentle reign.  
Most lovely Spring, earth welcomes thee,  
A greeting waves in every tree ;  
From every hedgerow, far and near,  
Tumultuous chorals, ringing clear,  
Fling to each odorous gale,  
From warbling hearts, their joyful hail.

The rustling leaves, with yellow breasts,  
Impatient cast the armor crests  
'Neath which, but little time ago,  
They shrank from Winter's cold and snow.  
Bursting buds their choice perfume,  
Woodland flowers their brightest bloom,  
Jocund brooks their gayest song,  
Twitt'ring birds their merriest throng,  
Dallying winds their gentlest sighs,  
Morning clouds their richest dyes,  
Liquid skies their deepest blue,  
Flaunting fields their greenest hue,  
Joy to give as homage due.  
'Neath the hill-side's shelt'ring lee,  
Where the violet springeth free,  
Play-day bees on lazy wing  
Gossip of the opening Spring,  
Gaudy flies in perk attire,  
Gold and green, and fring'd with fire.  
Dart and flash, and circling wheel,  
Humming low the joy they feel.  
And joyous is the mountain now,  
Though high upon its rocky brow  
A gleaming coronet of snow  
Sheds pearly drops to lakes below;  
But round its wide and wooded sweep,  
Where ancient firs and balsams weep  
Their fragrant tears, the wild-flowers spring,  
And wide the vines their tendrils fling,  
Or clasp around the rugged form  
Of some scarr'd wrestler with the storm.  
And joyous are the vales below —  
Their varied vestures brightly glow,  
And seem like water's liquid flow,  
So smoothly blend the gorgeous dyes  
In which the flooded landscape lies.  
In blushing morning's level beam,  
In mellow evening's purple gleam,  
Upwreathing in fantastic streams,



Vapory fragrance curling steams,  
 And wide around the landscape smokes  
 With incense; while the hoary oaks,  
 Towering grim through the cloudy sea,  
 In nature's temple seem to be  
 The priests of some religion old,  
 When earth and man one creed did hold:  
 But joining now in mystic rite  
 With winds and skies, and air and light,  
 From vales and groves and mossy dells,  
 From crystal lakes and rocky fells,  
 From all things joyful homage bring,  
 And rev'rent offer to the Spring.

## INADEQUATENESS.

## I.

Many be the songs of Spring  
 Trilled by poets happy-hearted:  
 Half they seem themselves to sing,  
 And, wakened by their caroling,  
 Tears of sudden joy are started.  
 But never deftest muse may find  
 Line so gently flowing  
 Soft to chime with April wind,  
 Through budding boughs of the wildwood blowing.

## II.

Lines there are so sweet, they seem  
 Summer-laden blossoms springing;—  
 Yellow cowslips' sunny gleam,  
 Or daisies by the shadowed stream  
 Brushed by wild-vine gently swinging.  
 But never subtlest art can frame  
 Words so fresh and glowing;  
 Fancy were not put to shame  
 By hare-bell blue, in the dingle growing.

## III.

Haunt we then the hazel dell?  
 Tenderest rhymes be left behind us;  
 There do softer warblings dwell,  
 And ripe with fuller beauty swell,  
 And sweeter poets there will find us.  
 All praise to songs of Summer when  
 Winter eves are dying;—  
 Wakens Spring the woods again?  
 Then Merlin's song leaves us weary sighing!

## DAWN.

The purple banners of the coming day  
 Waved broad above the ashen mountain's cone,  
 And flushed a shadowy halo up the gray  
 Of lonely heaven, deserted save where shone,  
 Wan with long vigil, weary, sad, alone,  
 One fainting star, with slowly-pulsing light,  
 Last patient watcher o'er the couch of night.

North, south, from peak to peak the glory rolled;  
 A 'wildered cloud, far voyaged, caught up the glow,  
 And crowned the western height with rivalled gold,  
 The emulative lake displayed below  
 In ruby tides diffused, the gorgeous show;  
 And, as redeemed from deluge waste anew,  
 Hill, valley, woodland, radiant rose to view.

## AUTUMNAL SONNETS.

## I.

*Discrowned.*

O'er banks of mossy mould how lightly strown  
 All the wan summer lies! The heedless tread  
 Awakes no sound, and had not pale leaves fled  
 As soft it came, the low wind were not known.  
 How strange the sharp and long-drawn shadows thrown  
 From lank and shriveled branches overhead,  
 While from their withered glories spoiler-shed  
 The earthy autumn scents are faintly blown.  
 Ah! reft and ravaged bowers, the garish day  
 Flaunts through the hidings of your dewy glooms:—  
 And though in leafy twilights wont to be,  
 Shy maid, sweet-thoughted Sadness, come away,  
 And here beneath this hemlock's drooping plumes,  
 With pensive Retrospection, muse with me.

## II.

*The First Frost.*

The hoar path sparkled in the level beam.  
 A frosty shimmer filled the silent air,  
 My quick breath curled in cloud lines faint and fair  
 As down the whitened field, along the stream,  
 Through the gray rushes flashing in the gleam,  
 Up the steep hillside-way I went, to where  
 With the dear wildwood I was wont to share  
 Each joy or pain through all the Summer's dream.  
 A chill fell on my heart. How still on high  
 The rimey branches stood against the blue!  
 No voice for me, no motion, nor a breath!  
 And I stood dumb; no pitying tear, no sigh  
 Of yearning hope, for deep I felt they knew  
 That cold and glittering silence told of Death.

## HOPE.

Dear Beech, now that thy pale tops tipped with brown  
  Drink softer tints from Autumn's golden air,  
  And not a motion wakes save here and there  
A lonely leaf comes wavering noiseless down,  
I fain would seek why Winter's frosty frown  
  Alone can charm thee all thy state to wear,  
  Alone can light that smile, so dear and fair  
That thy last hour is all the season's crown!  
Is it that when on us the drear days press,  
  Some strength our hearts may glean with grief to cope  
  As memory brings again thy loveliness;  
Or that beneath those still, prophetic signs  
  The yearning of thy sudden joy divines  
  The truth and promise of a fadeless Hope!

## FROM THEE COMETH HELP.

## I.

Dear Lord, this world which Thou hast wrought,  
And with Thine own divineness fraught,  
  No fullness has for me;  
I pine within this fair abode,  
  Nor, glad howe'er, content can be,  
Though from it to my heart has flowed  
  A beauty like the sea.

## II.

The narrow hopes of earthly days,  
The little hum of human praise,  
  Leave hunger in my breast;  
Though by her promise oft beguiled  
  To follow in an eager quest,  
Deceiving Hope a moment smiled,  
  Then left me void of rest.

## III.

For but with phantoms side by side  
 Through things of time my footsteps glide,  
 And like to shadows flee;  
 And beauty that may fill the soul  
 Athirst for an Infinity,  
 Springs not where circling seasons roll,  
 But lives alone in Thee.

## IV.

Ah then! from out my strivings vain,  
 Thou Home of Rest, thou Peace from pain,  
 I come to Thee alone;  
 O Fount of Life—O Life of Day—  
 O Fullness of Creation's zone—  
 Lift on my life the quick'ning ray  
 That makes me born Thine own.

## DEDICATION HYMN.

*At the opening of the new Cemetery at Pittsford, Vt.,  
 July 4, 1857.*

O Thou to whose eternal years  
 No grief, or loss, or change is known,  
 We hallow here our place of tears  
 For death that dwells with us alone.

Here hearts that bleed will sadly turn,—  
 Here Pity fill the drooping eye,  
 And stricken Hope with love will yearn  
 O'er us who fade away and die.

Yet we who weep, and they who rest,  
 Alike are known and dear to Thee;  
 And they are dearer to Thy breast  
 Than to our hearts they e'er can be.

Bless then this spot, where years shall bring  
Thy loved ones, Lord, to their repose;  
Spread o'er them here Thy sheltering wing,  
And in Thy peace their dust enclose.

So shall this place of tears be made  
The Hill of Hope, the Field of Peace;  
Here calmly then can we be laid  
To wait the hour when Time shall cease.

And when these bending skies have flown,  
And all who sleep shall rise again,  
Be this the garner of Thine own,  
The harvest of the Precious Grain.

Take Thou this Hill: It first was thine:  
From earthly use these bounds we free,—  
To nobler sheaves its roods resign,  
And give it, Lord, again to Thee.

III.

PRAYER-MEETING TALKS.







It was Dr. Walker's invariable habit to make elaborate preparation for the mid-week meeting, though always speaking from a skeleton outline of his address. These outlines often grew into sermons for Sunday use. Those here presented were chosen because found in his pocket-book at the time of his paralytic seizure. They had evidently been selected by him for future sermonic development. They were used at the prayer-meetings of the First Church, Hartford, in the years appended to each.

I.

John VIII : 12. *Not walk in darkness, etc.*

Occasion of Christ's words.

Imagery on which founded.

Implication with regard to life.

Promise *light*, not darkness.

But now, as a matter of practical experience, there is a great amount of doubtfulness. We believe, suppose, hope. A main reason for this :— we do not follow Christ. Do not take Him as guide. Do not

bring all things to the test of His words and life. Or we do these things imperfectly. Peter followed afar off ; got into trouble.

How to get light :—follow truth to its consequences.

I. Christ's loving presence and care. With you always. Think of it. Make effort to realize it. It will grow real and true. But many can't see. How to make the effort.

II. Duty as a Christian, if perplexed.

Begin at the sensitive point of conscience. Attempt something every day. Follow. Not all things at once. Progress in Christian living. There is great light in simple surrender to conscience and principle.

Grandeur in attitude of trust in God, where nothing else can be had : *Though He slay me*, etc. But that is not the general attitude of life. We need the light of life. The unity which comes through loving obedience, loving following. (1883.)

## II.

Matthew X : 2-4. *Now the names of the twelve apostles are these*, etc.

The variety and sufficiency of Christ's adaptation to men.

Christ might have done His work without any intimate companion ; or He might have had one only. But He had many, and their traits are carefully recorded with some distinctness.

Why? One reason is that the Gospel might be variously attested. Many witnesses. But a reason of no less significance is, that the Gospel's adaptation to many might be seen.

Who were they? Some of them.

1. Matthew, the man of business cares.
2. Nicodemus, learned in the law.
3. Joseph of Arimathæa, the man of wealth.
4. Peter, the impulsive fisherman.
5. John, the spiritual-minded.
6. Thomas, the doubting man; a type of character now familiar.
7. Mary Magdalene.

Their mention shows:—

I. The variousness of Christ's sympathy. He could reach different types of men. He had a real interest in them all.

II. The variousness of Christ's power to win allegiance and to satisfy need. The converse true. Unlike men loved Him. Their ideals all met in Him.

III. Encourages our trust in and approach to Him.  
(1884.)

### III.

II Cor. IX :8. *God is able to make all grace abound toward you, etc.*

A passage for people in view of some of life's difficult places.

A rich, full passage. It grew, as much of Scripture did, out of local circumstances. Its special occasion was the collection for the poor at Jerusalem.

It teaches that God is able to supply your need.

A general principle:—all grace needful for one's case can be had.

I. All needful wisdom in religious things. *If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God.* A precious promise, especially at such a time as the present. Diversity of views, contradictions of opinion, meet us. What is truth? Where? Perplexing to the young Christian; to the young minister. God is able to give needful wisdom. He is willing.

II. All needful strength in bearing what God sends. A precious promise to men in the midst of struggle;—to sufferers;—to those who foresee coming trouble: He will be with me. "He is able" to give strength.

III. All needful efficiency for work.

The idea of efficiency in all good works is sharply expressed in the text. Often impressed by Scripture writers. How can my work be most efficient? This one life I have to live. What a problem to any young person! To make the most of life.

Efficiency for special effort:

He is able to make His grace abound in the particular responsibilities of young ministers;—of Sunday-School teachers;—of parents;—of all. (1885.)

#### IV.

Matthew V : 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, etc.*

A controverted passage. Pelagians, Methodist Perfectionists, etc.

My purpose does not take into the field of discussion the question whether it is possible to be sinless or not.

A practical use of the text. Take a high aim. Set

God's perfectness as a standard. What Christ had been saying. *Ye have heard*, etc. A low standard. Christ calls His followers to rise above it. He exhorts them: *Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

An exhortation and a standard like this is most important, for there prevails very often and enervatingly among men a hopeless view of the possibilities of resistance to evil.

I. In self. We conclude evil must necessarily be "temper," "weakness," "fault," "infirmity."

II. In the world. There always has been sin. We conclude that there always must be great evils.

The result is a practical Manichæanism. Dual principles. Permanent.

Now the Christian doctrine is that evil can be overcome. *The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

Salvation has two aspects:—Forgiveness, cleansing.

Christ's work: *He shall save His people from their sins. The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.* Titus II: 14. Its object is primarily to overcome sin.

It makes a mighty difference in his struggle whether the attitude of the Christian is one of hope or of doubt.

How can sin be overcome? A suggestive passage is Romans XII: 21: *Overcome evil with good.* Displace it by something better.

(a) In self. Put yourself into other things. Get interested in something more worthy. Make yourself interested.

(b) In the world. Set good in place of bad. Value of high aims and of co-operative efforts. (1888.)

## V.

Luke XVIII : 41. *What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?*

The blind man had precise knowledge of his need.

We all pray. We pray often. We use strong language of importunity. But suppose Christ should ask of each one of us the question : What for *thee* ?

Liability to vagueness in prayer ; in confession ; in supplication.

I. Importance of a knowledge of what we need.

1. Of particular faults to be rectified.

Illustrate by drawing. Elocution.

2. Of particular deficiencies to be supplied.

Physical lacks are a subject of study and of protracted efforts to remedy. Spiritual deficiencies should be no less so.

II. Importance of a desire for Spiritual blessings. Hunger and thirst after righteousness.

III. Importance of co-operation with our prayers.

One great cause of their frustration is, that we pray one way and go another. Live in accordance with our prayers.

IV. Importance of expectancy of results.

The true relation between means and ends. The Gospel hopeful. (1892.)

IV.

SERMONS.







I.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.\*

EPHESIANS III: 14, 15.

*“The Father, from whom every family [Greek fatherhood] in heaven and on earth is named.”*

I am not certain whether I have ever, at Sunday service, or Thursday lecture, taken these precise words of Scripture as a text for remark or not. Possibly a sufficient rummaging among old manuscripts would enable me to determine. But the question is of very little consequence. If I ever did use them it was well; if I never did I am sorry. If I were to use them a dozen times it would not be too often. For these words not only bring before us a truth of supremest interest to us all, but they do it in a peculiarly striking and effective manner.

The general truth that the apostle in this passage affirms is God's Fatherhood of us and of all men. The peculiar presentation he makes of the fact is that the Fatherhood of God is the original type and pattern of all other fatherhood that we know of anywhere. “The

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\* Preached on February 9, 1890, on recovery from a severe illness.

Father from whom every fatherhood, in heaven and on earth, is named." God, that is to say, is not simply called the Father of men because there are traits in Him somewhat like those in earthly parents, and because relations exist between Him and us which have an analogy to those which exist between us and our children. Perhaps we have sometimes thought of the matter in that way. If so, we have thought of it exactly the wrong way round. God's Fatherhood is the original thing; man's fatherhood is the derived and imitative thing. The human parenthood is but a poor, imperfect image of the Divine parenthood, even as man, whom the Scriptures tell us was made "in God's image," is but a sorry likeness of the being in whose image he was made.

Now, my dear friends, I do not know exactly how it may be with you, but I confess that for myself there is no fact of this life of ours which grows so in significance and in value as I go onward in it, as the fact of God's Fatherhood. There is no other truth I can think of, so freighted with hope and comfort for this troubled world, as this of which it seems to have been so primal an object of Christ's mission upon earth to convince men, the Fatherliness of God toward men. How often that word "Father" was on His lips. How continual His use of that tender name, not only in His personal references to His own relationship to God, but in those collective references which embraced others than Himself,— nay, which embraced very sinful and imperfect men as well as Himself. When twelve ignorant men, one of whom certainly was ultimately apostate, came to Him with the request, "Lord, teach us to pray," what was the address with which

He bade them draw nigh to the object of their adoration and supplication ?

Not, O infinite and unchangeable sovereign ; not, supreme and predetermining disposer, but, "Our Father which art in heaven." When, in His conversation with the inquiring and scholarly Nicodemus on the object and scope of His mission, Christ gave perhaps the most concise and explicit definition of the origin and intent of His enterprise that He ever anywhere expressed, this was what He declared it to be : "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but should have eternal life."

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that in old times God spake "unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners," but that He "hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." And no fact is plainer in that Son's communication to men than His importunity and reiteration in declaring the Fatherly character of His God and ours.

And yet how slowly has this Fatherly view of the divine character grown among men ! How much more ready have men been to fasten upon some adjunctive and subsidiary feature of the revealed attributes of the Being with whom we have to do — His kingly power, His unchangeable wisdom, His sovereign purposes, His righteous justice — rather than to reach up toward an endeavor to comprehend something of that Infinite Fatherliness in which, with a great deal beside, all those separate characteristics coalesce and inhere !

It has always been an interesting fact to me that as thoughtful men and women grow old in the Christian life — I speak in a general way and with full recogni-

tion of the existence of exceptional people run in peculiarly dialectic or dogmatic moulds—a readier response arises in their breasts to presentations of the divine character and dealings which bring out the Fatherly traits of the divine nature. I cannot think this is altogether the effect of the softening influence of age. Not by any means is it to be wholly ascribed to that increased tenderness of feeling which takes its softened coloring from the eye that, as Wordsworth says:—

“hath kept watch over man’s mortality.”

Some such increased leniency of judgment undoubtedly there is which is the result of experience. Our own failures and faults lead us to be more forbearing toward the faults and failures of others. Our own sense of the need for ourselves of some traits in the divine character other than those of the justice before which we have trembled, or the holiness before which we have bowed ourselves in awful adoration, make us more recognitive as we go on in life, of such characteristics as disclosed and actual in the being whom we worship.

Youth is proverbially peremptory and severe. Narrow in self-knowledge, limited in observation of others, it judges quickly and it judges hardly. It knows not how to make allowances. It has little appreciation of what is contained in that sweet saying of Scripture, “He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust.”

I had a sweet, bright boy once, lent me for seven years before God took him. Brighter and more generous little soul never lighted up any household with his mirth and jollity. But he had the peremptoriness and posi-

tiveness which I have said was characteristic of youth. A natural leader of others, his playmates would gather in a group about him, and from the vantage ground of a box or a chair he would preach them a sermon. I confess that his sermons were of the denunciatory rather than the consolatory kind. He told me once with a voice like a silver bell that he had compiled a code of laws; "fifty-three laws," said he, "and every one of them hanging laws but two." Ah, me! had he lived a little longer the number of the hanging laws in his code would have been smaller, and the sermons he preached would have doubtless taken sometimes more heed of men's need of forgiveness and consolation.

But though there is doubtless an influence, as I have said, in increasing age and in widening experience to soften men's judgment of others, and to make them look, in their estimates of the divine character, for those traits which bespeak His grace more than His power, still I cannot believe that the increasing tendency toward more filial thoughts of God, of which I have spoken as belonging to aging piety, is mainly attributable to these causes. On the contrary, it is, I think, much more ascribable to the better understanding of God's character attained by growing more like Him. And as it is with the individual, so also is it with the perfecting experience of the Church as a whole. A process goes on in the general Christian mind of the race analogous to that which takes place in the mind of the single disciple. The educated and experienced consciousness of men feels the need and recognizes the reality of traits in the divine character which the ruder and more juvenile periods of human life thought not about and cared not for. Put the con-

ception of God entertained by most of the old Hebrew prophets beside that conception presented by Him who spake as never man spake, and you will see the contrast which I mean. Not that those old Hebrew prophets spoke wrongly; but they spoke comparatively youthfully and imperfectly. Not but what there is a true meaning in that which they said about God's being "wroth," and "jealous," and His being "a man of war," and of His "anger with the wicked every day," and of His waiting to see their feet "slide in due time." Far be it from me, either for the interests of my own soul or of yours, my hearers, to disguise the solemn truth metaphorically set forth in a hundred such passages as those. But when such representations are put beside the larger and riper disclosures of the New Testament, and especially of Christ's own utterances, wherein He sets God before us, not under some such figure of kingship or judgeship as naturally appeals to a ruder and more lawless period of human experience, but under His own chosen figure of divine Paternity, we feel if we cannot express, we know if we do not quite dare to acknowledge, that there is a tremendous difference. .

But my object at this time was not so much to argue this fact of a fuller and riper conception of God's nature arising from the characteristic presentation of Him to us by Christ as the Father of men, as to call brief attention to some inferences from this conception itself—inferences which it seems to me are full of instruction and of comfort, while not wanting in suggestions of admonition also.

The necessary limitations of a single Sabbath service counsel me to say only a very little of what might

be said on this subject ; and I shall speak of but two of these apparently necessary deductions from the Fatherliness of God's character of which we are thinking at this time.

One of these inferences is the necessary kindness and generosity of God in dealing with all his creatures — with all of them, I say. I did not say with a certain favored and unalterable number of them, but with all of them. If there is any significance in fatherhood in these poor human lives of ours, it means patience, kindness, generosity, self-sacrifice, does it not ? When we speak of a "fatherly act," the conception which comes up to mind is one of affection and attempted good doing, is it not ?

Now, this conception which we have borrowed from these imperfect relationships of our earthly lives Christ boldly takes hold of and applies to the relationship of God to us. And He does not limit the application of this conception — as some good men since He lived have sometimes done — to such only as recognize and yield to the reality of a heavenly tie. Nay, He explicitly affirms the existence of the relationship, and its manifestation, too, in the case of others. This is the very ground of Christ's appeal to us in His great Sermon on the Mount to become like our Father in heaven, that "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." The conception of Fatherhood, therefore, in Christ's use of it, as well as in our own poor imitative use of it in these human relationships, which borrow all their significance from that older and diviner relationship from which "every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named," must involve at least this much —



kindness, generous estimate, willingness to do the utmost possible to be done compatible with wisdom, righteousness, and the interests of all, for the welfare of each one, the very last and least, of all the creatures — all the children, rather — He has made. No room here for some awful doctrines which have found place in certain theologies, as if there were a class of God's children which never were His children; creatures made for the very purpose of being renounced and cast away.

The Christian world, under the progressively educative power of the Gospel of Christ's own life and words, is not only passing through that corporate change wherethrough I said the individual man passes from the hastiness and severity of youth to the tenderness and allowance of age; but, beyond that, is, I think, entering more truly into the deeper spirit of the Gospel itself and of Christ, the chief messenger of that Gospel. It is drawing its formulating conceptions of the divine character not so much, as it has done in the past, from the ideas of sovereignty and judgship and power, but from that larger and more divine idea set forth in the message and in the very name of the divine Son — the Fatherliness of God.

Blessed and auspicious change! Change carrying with it, as one of the two necessary inferences I said were suggested, the kindness and liberality of God in dealing with all his creatures.

The other inference from that divine Fatherliness which our text assures us is the very type and origin of all other conceptions of fatherliness among men, is the inference that God will always in His dealings with His creatures seek the highest good of each one,



and the largest welfare of all. He can forget neither of these endeavors and yet retain that character of Fatherliness which He has taught us to cherish and to imitate in our relations with one another. He must choose for the individual, not what is easiest, perhaps, not what is most comfortable, not what is desirable, judged by some temporary and material, perhaps some earthly and sensual, standard; but what is best. That is to say, God's Fatherliness must make Him put that supreme which is supreme, the moral and spiritual welfare of each one of His children. Everything must be subordinated to that. If that can be had and other more or less comfortable things can be had also, why then those more or less comfortable things may be expected. But if that cannot be had except at the loss of the lesser good, then the lesser good must go.

Nor can God forget, any more than an earthly father can forget, the confederated character of His family. He must have in view the welfare of His whole household. He cannot overlook, He cannot disregard, what threatens the common weal. It is not fatherliness here in these little family groups we know about among ourselves, to permit some turbulent and incorrigible member to bring annoyance upon the whole companionship and dishonor upon the entire family name by the exercise of a weak and indiscriminating good nature, and disregard of obduracy and wrong. That is sometimes mistakenly called fatherliness. But it is not fatherliness in men. Nor is it in God.

That God is the Father of men does not at all imply that all government over them suffers lapse, that all discipline of them is dropped into disuse, that all severity, even, in dealing with them is abandoned. These

are not thoughts to be cast aside as belonging only to a theory of the divine relationship to men which is entertained no more. If any chance hearer in this house to-day, unaccustomed to the general strain of teachings from this desk, has seemed to gather from a former portion of this discourse that the idea of the divine Fatherhood now inculcated lets open the door to a weak and sentimental view of God's claims and man's responsibilities, the mistake may now be corrected. Indeed, for myself, I can think of no more perfect ideal of thorough, efficient government, of persuasive and effectual penalties, than those existent in a true family. When I look back on that household group of which I was in childhood the quick-tempered and errant member, and recall the grand, regretful, sometimes austere and averted countenance of my father at knowledge of my wrong-doing, and the saddened, disappointed face of my patient, heroic mother, I bring up to myself a picture more photographic than any I can discover beside, of the pain there would be in the withdrawal of the Heavenly Parent's smile, and the shutting out from the companionship of the heavenly family. It was not the chastising stroke—though memory of such on some occasions still survives over the lapse of so many years—but it was the sense of fatherliness and motherliness, grieved, wounded, and wronged, which was then, and is increasingly still, after nigh a half century has fled, the keenest factor in the discipline of my trespass on the household weal and law. Ah! let no one think that the doctrine of the divine Fatherliness is the door-opener to loose and careless estimates of sin. Let it not be imagined that taking Christ at His word and believing that we have

a Father in heaven is to make men indifferent to His claims. It is not so. Speak of Him as judge and men may seek to evade His sentence. Represent Him as king and they may try to escape the reach of His power. But let them really believe that God is their Father, in the truest, most literal, most richly-freighted meaning of that precious name, and they will — I do not say that they will certainly turn to Him with contrition and penitence, for I do not know the possible strength of human sinfulness and perversity — but they will at least feel an attractiveness in His character which those other titles alone do not suggest, and they will feel a culpability in themselves which cannot arise from the mere contemplation of some single attribute personifying Him, for example, as justice or power. Certainly, whatever may be the fact in any actual case as a practical result, nothing can be so divinely suited to bring a sinner to a better mind as the remembrance that all that he knows or can think of in true Fatherliness belongs to and dwells forever in that God from whom those conceptions were first derived, and who teaches us, sinful as we are, to come to Him with the cry, “Our Father which art in heaven.” If he refuses the overtures of a Father, what possible rescue can there be for him? If he conducts himself so that a Father — for the household’s sake — must needs shut him out of the family door, what power can ever bring him back again?

Yet now, just before I close, it seems to me I hear some one say, “But why, if God is our Father, does the possibility exist that any child of His should ever become alienated from Him; that sin, trouble, or pain should be found anywhere in a world of which

He is the Creator, and in a family of which He is the parent ? ”

My dear questioning friend, if such a questioner there be here, I do not know. I have never undertaken to answer that problem. There are inquiries a child may make which even a philosopher cannot answer. And before this inquiry why sin and evil were ever allowed to find their way, with all their train of disastrous consequences to individuals and to the race, into this family circle of which God is the Father, the whole world has stood questioning and perplexed from the beginning till now. It is a problem which many a wise theologian has attempted to solve, but the Bible does not make the effort, and the endeavors of men have not had much success. *How* evil came into this little world the Scriptures try to figure forth to us on one of the Bible's earliest pages ; but *why* it was permitted to come, I do not find that the Word of God makes the least endeavor anywhere even to hint. But it is here. And being here it does make some difference, I think, whether we think of it as being, with all its mystery, in a Father's family, or in the ranks only of a companionship under the rule of mere intelligence or power. Sin is here, and trouble is here, and bereavement and suffering are here, but it does matter something whether, spite of them all, I can still believe the infinite power above me, whose ways I cannot comprehend, is nevertheless my Father, and not merely my Sovereign and my Judge.

Ah yes, what a difference ! I cannot understand all my Father's ways, but if I can believe Him my Father still, I can trust Him where I cannot understand. He may frown upon me for my sin ; but I shall know

— not with less pain indeed on my part — that it is a Father's frown. He may suffer me to be tried and perplexed and bereaved, but while I remember that not blind fate, not mere sovereign power, not justice or holiness, even, apart from parental love, but that Fatherly pity, Fatherly righteousness, Fatherly love are concerned in my welfare I shall not despair. I shall remember the name by which He calls Himself. I shall think that all that I know of fatherliness in this world is but a reflection of what is first of all in Him, and I shall hold on to the belief that He will do for me all that a wise and loving Father consistently can do, till the time comes when, perhaps, some of the present mystery of existing evil and of human trouble may be cleared up, and the day break and the shadows flee away.

Meantime, dear friends, what can we better do to gain strength for present duty, encouragement in present perplexity, comfort even in any present distress, than to reinforce and confirm in ourselves the assurance — so often affirmed in the Word of God — that we have a Father in Heaven to comfort us ; a Father to whom in a truer, deeper, more abiding sense than any we have ever known beside that blessed name belongs, "*The Father* from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named ? "

“O Father-eye that hath so truly watched.  
 O Father-hand that hath so gently led,  
 O Father-heart that by my prayer is touched,  
 That loved me first when I was cold and dead ;  
 Still do Thou lead me on with tender care  
 Through narrow ways wherein I ought to go ;  
 And train me for that home I am to share.  
 Alike through love and loss, and weal and woe.”

## II.

## DIVINE CALLS.\*

GENESIS XII: 1.

*Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.*

I SAMUEL III: 10.

*And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.*

JOHN X: 3.

*And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

HEBREWS III: 1.

*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*

It is not a merely arbitrary association which has gathered these four verses of Scripture together from the various and widely separated places in which they are found in Holy Writ.

Not, indeed, but what a good many others might properly have been associated with them, as equally belonging in the same category and as teaching the same truth. But I have selected these four as adequately illustrative specimens of their kind. As a mineralogist might take up specimens of malachite

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\* Written in 1889.

or of beryl and say, "This specimen came from Russia; this from Japan; this from Alaska, and this from Brazil; but they all belong together, and belong to multitudes of other specimens which might be associated with them, because they have the same structural character and component elements;" so I take these four wide-sundered passages of Scripture as one in their moral import and instruction to us who read them to-day. And what is that truth of which these various Scriptures tell us? It is a truth which I fear we have some way come to think a kind of far-off, historical, Scripture-time matter, instead of being, what indeed it is, a matter of most immediate, personal, and practical concern to us all: the truth, that is, of a Divine Call to individual souls.

We read, for example, of God's call to Abram to leave his country and go out into a strange land; or of God's call to Moses to leave his sheep-tending in Midian and to go into Pharaoh's palace and command him to let his captive Israelites go; or of God's call to Samuel, or David, or Solomon, or Isaiah, or John the Apostle, or Paul,—and some way we think the majesty of the fact fits in with the dignity of the circumstances; and therefore we vaguely assent to the reality of the alleged event. But when it comes to recognizing the reality of Divine Calls as a part of individual, present experience; when it comes to applying the plain implications and statements of Scripture such as "My sheep hear my voice," or "He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out," to the living experiences of living men and women, in the midst of the rush and bustle of our common affairs there is, I fear, some hesitation about the matter.



Yet, my friends, if the door has ever been open between heaven and earth, why should it not stay open? If God has ever made personal communications of His will to men, why should He not make them now? Was life ever more perplexed than it often is still? Were souls ever more in need of heavenly leadership than they are to-day?

And it is not without its mighty and practical significance in encouraging and helping us to accept and rely on this fact of Divine communications to men which Scripture everywhere alleges and implies, that the Word of God is so reserved in its statements about the method of those communications of which it specifically tells us in the past. For example, we read concerning the call of Abram: "And the Lord *said* unto Abram." What does that mean? Did Abram see a vision? Did he hear an audible voice? In what way was that divine command impressed upon the mind of the patriarch that he was to get out of his country and his father's house? We cannot tell. How did God "talk" with Moses at the burning bush? What is meant when it is said of the call to Samuel, "The Lord came and stood as at other times"? Details are in all cases suppressed. Had we had in these cases definite, elaborate depictions of how it was that God came to, and made Himself understood by, Abram and Moses and Samuel and Isaiah, we should find ourselves continually trying to test the reality of any present experiences of heavenly suggestion and call by their correspondence with the outward circumstances and manner,—that is to say, the mere outward accidents,—of the historic calls of the past. Grant once that heaven's door is open toward earth; grant once



that God has made communications of His will to men ; and there is no improbability in supposing that His summons come continually. There is no trouble about the methods of their coming. All possible things may become instruments and vehicles of suggestion and teaching to beings whom God has once undertaken to lead and bless.

The great trouble about the realization and appropriation of Divine calls to men is owing to the low and dull views of all spiritual relationships between heaven and earth, between God and men, into which the Church has permitted itself to fall. The great truth underlying the movement in religious history represented two centuries and more ago by the Quakers, and which has been again and again championed by some body of Christian people when the Church has fixed its eyes too exclusively on the Bible as the source of *all* its spiritual light, and on a historic Saviour as the source of *all* its life,—the truth that God *now* moves on human hearts, *now* breathes into and guides His children, that Christ's sheep still hear His voice, — is a truth which we ourselves need more vividly to realize. It is a truth, however, not so much for intellectual assent as for practical appropriation. Therefore, turning away from any further argument about it as a matter to be accepted or set in its proper place in a religious system, let us see for a few practical moments how we ourselves may reasonably expect to receive, and how we ought to treat the calls of God to us.

How, then, may we expect to hear God's calls ?

If there were any necessity, in order that intimations of the Divine will should be conveyed to us for our

spiritual guidance, that a voice from heaven should speak to us, or that a burning bush should attract our notice, why then, I think, all we know of our Father in Heaven and of His substantial interest in our concerns might fairly encourage us to look for some such outward visibilities or audibilities as those. But God has hundreds of ways of drawing near to us beside any such. Indeed, it is not too much to say that methods of divine communication to men which in the childhood of time were best for the solitary patriarch on the Chaldean plains, or for the prophetic child sleeping uneasily behind the Tabernacle veil would plainly not be best now. Those were days when life was comparatively solitary; writing almost unknown; communication between even adjacent sections of country slow, accidental, unnecessary. Religious events were handed down in tradition; by oral transit from generation to generation; or gathered slowly up in some chronicle of Levite or seer, perhaps the only man in a thousand who knew how to write his name. What if, in our day of newspapers and the universal approximation of all places to one another, methods of divine communication we can easily conceive to be suited to such an infancy of society, should be the only possible methods, and the telegraph should tell us each morning of some burning bush in Sumatra, South America, or Italy; some voice out of the skies heard at London, Berlin, or Paris; some ascension of an Elijah at Moscow, Calcutta, or New York, what a Babel this world would be, even supposing every thus narrated incident were a veritable matter of divine interposal in human affairs!

The fact seems to be that — apart from that volume

of inspired truth which is in great degree a record of God's dealings with men in the past; and apart from those occasional, personal, immediate persuasions or illuminations of the Divine Spirit which Scripture promises and the Christian experience of almost every devout heart more or less fully confirms,—apart from these things, I say,—the main instrument of God's impression of His will upon men is the providential occurrences of life. He brings Himself near to us in the ordering of events concerning us. That tangled, mysterious, ever-changeable web of “happenings” — as we call them,—by which we are enveloped, and which cannot be explained or unraveled except by the recognition of a heavenly hand in matters great or small,—that is the commonest of the instrumentalities which God employs to teach men of Himself. Doubtless He adds (as I only a moment ago intimated) other and more spiritual suggestions of His presence to those who are sensitive to them or watchful for them. But even without these, what a marvellously complex and powerful instrumentality for coming near to men, and making Himself felt by them, that is, which is found in the providential occurrences of life! Think of the continual unexpectedness of these events of Providence; of the irresistibility of their power over us in their coming; of the infinite variety of their character! They range all the way from our keenest joy to our severest sorrow; from our sweetest hope to our bitterest disappointment. They lay their guiding or their persuasive hands upon us at every turn, and give us at every moment the opportunity of recognizing the power which is dealing with us, and of considering, at least, the purposes of that heavenly will.

Those of you, my friends, who look back over any considerable pathway of experience, marked by life's common changes and events,—its gains and its losses; its bestowals and its bereavements; its births and its burials; its bridals and its funerals,—have you not had reason to recognize the closeness of a divine approach to you? Did Matthew, sitting at his place of toll, when a passing stranger said “follow me,” or Samuel, stirred at midnight by a voice calling him by name, receive a more definite summons to a new and different life, than some of you have met in the touch on your souls of some of life's events which have befallen you? You have had your heavenly calls, most of you. Not Moses or Jeremiah more surely, however differently. When you buried your father or your child; when your husband's face was hid from you forever; when the pleasure or the business success you thought so close vanished in a moment; when you were brought into connection with some person whose life gave you a glimpse of a nobler life than yours; when some flash of divine truth shot in upon you with unwonted power,—then a call, sweet or solemn, but personal, immediate, meant for you and intended for your good, sounded in your soul, and gave assurance of One nigh to you as ever God was nigh to prophet of old. Ah! you have many of you felt this! And when you—some of you certainly—are able to add to this common general experience of the comings nigh to us of God in His providence, His comings nigh in some measure at least, with those inward suggestions of His Spirit, also, which illuminate His Word, or prompt your prayer, what need you more to assure you of a “heavenly call,” as a part of your

personal experience? Would sights of a burning bush, or of an axe that did not sink, or of a stick that became a serpent, or the straightening of a palsied arm, really add anything to the substantial persuasion of your hearts that God had come nigh unto you?

Convinced thus, I trust, of the reality of the calls of God to us as a part of actual, and, indeed, in some degree of universal experience, the very important further question arises: How are we to treat them?

And here it seems to me, the records of old time are exceedingly instructive. There was, (even the meager chronicles of Biblical story show us that,) there was a vast diversity in the way in which the old-time calls came to men. But there was no diversity in the moral action consequent upon their reception. Recognition and obedience, these were the responses of the devout hearts of ancient story, whose co-operation with the divine will, in some high enterprise of duty or of blessing, has made their lives luminous with instruction for all after times. When Abram on those far Chaldean plains became once aware of the divine will to get him out of his country and from his father's house, he "obeyed and went out," albeit he "knew not whither he went." When Moses received the command to go into that Egypt from which he had fled in peril of his life, he went. When the word of the Lord concerning the captivity of Judah came to Jeremiah, he spoke that word in the ears of the king and princes of Judah, albeit he knew that a dungeon and abuse would be the reward of his fidelity. When the voice came to Peter and Andrew by the Galilean sea, "Come ye after me," they left their nets, and followed the Master. When the arresting light and

power of heaven struck down Paul on his way to Damascus, he was "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision," but asked in submission, "What shall I do?" Not but what, in some most conspicuous instances recorded in Holy Writ, there was hesitation and some degree of self distrust at first, in obeying the heavenly summons. It is told us, and herein I think we have a very tender and beautiful token of the divine consideration of us, that the fact is recorded, it is told us how even Moses argued with the Lord his unfitness for the work to which God called him ; and Isaiah protested his insufficiency for the task laid upon him ; and Ananias tried to excuse himself from the duty of visiting that blood-thirsty man Saul, whom God told him to seek out and to comfort.

But the thing to be noticed is that, however any of those old servants of God hesitated or questioned at first, they obeyed. That was what gave them their place in religious history. However conscious of personal imperfection, however overwhelmed with the sense of mighty and well-nigh annihilating responsibilities laid on them, when once really convinced of the divine will they yielded to that will ; they made that will their own ; they went forward doing it to the immortality of earthly history and the immortality of eternal life. Had they done otherwise, had they declined even the seeming-impossible service, never would their names have been recorded for our guidance, or written in the Book of Heaven to their own everlasting joy. That they sometimes a moment faltered is told us for our consolation in our weakness. That they consecratedly and fully obeyed is told us also, as the condition of their and our welfare.

All which, my friends, seems to me profoundly instructive as to our treatment of our heavenly calls. The voice of God in His providence does sometimes seem to speak pretty trying things to hear. It directs to duties hard to fulfill. It bids us bear burdens hard to carry ; undertake labors difficult to perform ; endure sorrows wearisome to sustain. To get out of one's own familiar country to a strange land is not altogether an easy matter, even if that familiar country should happen to be Sodom.

Bunyan's " Christian " had a hard time of it getting away even from the " City of Destruction " and the companionship of people who were very shortly to be altogether burned up. But, hard or easy, our safety and our joy also is in yielding to the heavenly call. Recognition and obedience—these are the attitudes commended to us by all the examples recorded in Holy Writ, and by all the scarcely less illustrious or authoritative examples of Christian history since the book of Scripture closed.

" How can I bear this burden ? How can I take up this responsibility ? How can I go forth on this enterprise, not knowing whither I go ? " Language like this has been the utterance of many a Christian sufferer, many a Christian laborer, to whom the call of God has in some way come. But listening to that voice, submitting to the will which appoints the sorrow, imposes the task, directs the way, courage has come for the enterprise, strength for the toil, patience for the grief ; and the experience of Scripture prophets and heroes has been repeated in thousands of our common lives.

Which leads easily to one further and most impor-



tant suggestion, concerning this matter of heavenly calls.

What a satisfaction it is, anyway, even if the providential voice which speaks to us sometimes says things which are hard to hear, that it does speak!

How infinitely preferable in that tangled web of circumstance in which we are enveloped and of which we sometimes seem to be only a helpless part, that there should be tokens of a high and heavenly purpose concerning us, even if manifested sometimes in severe and painful ways, rather than that life should float easily on with us with no proof of a recognizing will above us, and no evidence of a Father's hand in our affairs.

There may, possibly, be persons so materialized in heart, and so contented with what contents a mere animal, that life has for them no hungers for anything better. But for most of us, I am sure, the thing which makes life a possession of worth and dignity to us, is the tokens of divinity there are in it. It is the evidence that I can find in my life that my God is dealing with me; caring for me; has His gracious plans concerning me, which keeps me in self-respect and sets a value on my days. Leave me to myself, with no Father above to care for me, and no Spirit of Grace to deal with me, and no sequent and resultant future to which all the present leads on, and what is life worth?

I may have my pleasures as the animals do, I may accumulate my little store as do the squirrels and the ants, I may form one of an insignificant confederacy somewhat higher than the beaver or the ape, with somewhat larger knowledge and somewhat more intelli-



gent aims, but unless there is the infinite difference of a moral relationship between me and God,—unless God is my Father in such sense as He is not to them; unless He can touch me, and I can go to Him; unless I can feel that the door is open between me and Him, and that He has purposes of power and grace which He is working out with me and helping me to work out with Him—then—however others feel, I care not how soon the curtain of silence falls on this scene of things. In the eclipse of that great elevating hope, there is nothing that is not eclipsed. What is left of life after that great joy and confidence is gone out of it, is a thing of rags. What we want, my friends, is not less but more of God-tokens in our lives! The thing we ought to pray for is not fewer but more of the heavenly calls. It is those calls which keep us in mind of our dignity and our destiny. It is by the frequent hearing of them that we are kept out of the mire of our selfishness, our vanity, our mere animalism and death.

More and more to remind us of our prerogative as the children of God and of the high purposes of our Father in heaven concerning us, should we be watchful for the voices of God's providence in our lives. Realizing the importance to us, above all things beside, of the consciousness of God's nearness to us, and of His interest in our welfare, we may well make it our prayer, as it was the Psalmist's of old: "Be not silent to me," O God: "Be not silent to me: lest if Thou be silent to me I become like them that go down into the pit."

"Speak to me Lord, Thyself reveal  
While here on earth I rove;  
Speak Thou to me and let me feel  
The kindling of Thy love."

## III.

## CHRIST'S INVITATION.\*

JOHN VII: 37.

*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

Call up a moment, as far as we can, through the mists of eighteen centuries, the scene when these words were spoken!

The place was Jerusalem. The time was the autumn of the year. The occasion was the Feast of Tabernacles. For seven days, now, the inhabitants of the city and multitudes from the country had been living in little booths or huts made of the boughs of myrtle and palm and olive trees. These huts were to be seen everywhere. They were on housetops; in the court of the Temple; along the street-sides; wherever nestling-place could be found for them. The purpose of the festival of Tabernacles was twofold: it was a thanksgiving for harvest, and it was a memorial of the time when the Israelites dwelt in tents, in their passage through the wilderness. The feast was one of special joyfulness. The people were dressed in their holiday attire. Each carried in his hand the branch of some plant attractive for its beauty or its fragrance.

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\* Written in 1871, with large use of a sermon written in 1860 on the same text.

The altar in the Temple was dressed out with garlands of willow, of which each worshiper was expected to bring one. The offerings on the altar were more abundant than those of any other festival of the year.

But the enthusiasm of the occasion seems to have concentrated itself mainly on two transactions, each of them occurring daily. One of these was the pouring out, every morning, in the Temple courts, in the presence of the gathered multitude, of a golden ewer of water brought from the Pool of Siloam, and which typified the water miraculously supplied to their fathers, in the desert, at the rock of Meribah.

The other was the lighting, in the evening, of some great lamps, which, from their elevation on the Temple-hill, cast their radiance over the whole city, and were intended to symbolize the fiery pillar of the ancient wilderness.

Both of these incidents, each day repeated, were events precluded by the sound of trumpets, and followed by singing and general rejoicings.

It is, however, with only the first of these two ceremonies that we are now specially concerned. But this, on this eighth morning, asks our notice.

Interest in the festival, and especially in this striking incident of it, has been, as usual, deepening from day to day. And now the last day — what the Evangelist calls emphatically the “great day” — of the celebration has come.

The crowds are gathered in the Temple area. The morning sacrifice is smoking upon the altar. Presently there is a sudden blast from a chorus of silver trumpets; and one of the priests advances bearing the golden ewer. He ascends the brazen steps of the

altar. In the sight of all the people he pours the limpid stream over the altar's edge, as fifteen centuries before, in the thirsty wilderness, the flowing current which had saved the people's life had trickled from the smitten rock. As the water falls into the silver basin at the altar's foot, the multitude breaks into song. It is the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm which they sing,—that Psalm whose constantly recurring burden is, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; because His mercy endureth forever." A hush follows the conclusion of the Psalm. The people's minds have been touched and raised by contemplation of this memorial of their nation's old deliverance from death by thirst; perhaps some of them have been lifted to the thought of a supply of needs more spiritual; of wants common to their fathers and to them.

It is in the hush of this supreme moment, probably, that a clear, sweet voice breaks the silence. It comes not from the priests gathered near the altar. It is a young man standing among the multitudes, on the common floor of the Temple court, whose voice sounds out over the hushed and astonished assembly. And what is it that He says? The words are as startling as the occasion of their utterance.

"If any man thirst" — this is the strange cry which peals over the astonished multitude — "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." More than eighteen hundred years, my hearers, have passed since this saying broke the silence of that autumnal festival. But not a day since has gone which has not borne its testimony to the truthfulness and the importance of the announcement there made.

Some who heard it first, accepted it there and then. And they said, This is indeed "the Christ." But ever since, in every age of the world, the number has been increasing of those who have heard the invitation and have found its offer true. "Come unto Me and drink;" "whatever your want, look to Me for its supply"—that was the utterance which sounded over the Temple multitude. And it is an utterance which has never died. From generation to generation it has sounded still,—not merely in men's ears, but in the experience of many of their hearts.

Christ has been found the supply of need. He has met the deepest wants of men. The thirst of the soul,—that old, spiritual thirst which has taken hold, at times, on every thoughtful individual of our race,—has been satisfied, and may still be satisfied by Christ, as from no other source beside.

Glance with me a few minutes at some of those common wants of men,—your wants, my wants,—to which the offer of Christ has been found a supply.

Knowledge, then, is one of these common wants. There is a thirst in the human soul for knowledge—knowledge respecting its own destinies and the relations in which it stands in the universe, which He who said "Come unto Me" can alone satisfy.

I do not forget that there is a very wide range of important knowledge, to which the faculties of men are, in a sense, competent of themselves. I do not disregard, nor do I underrate, the greatness of those natural powers—divinely bestowed on man—by which he grapples successfully with a thousand difficult problems of the world in which he is. We live in a period of time when the splendor of these native en-

dowments of the human intellect is receiving constant illustration. We see it in those unfoldings of physical science which are almost making this a new world, so rich, so manifold are the wonders which are daily revealing to our eyes. We see it in that enthusiasm of historic investigation which has shrunk at no toil in order carefully to discriminate and bring before us of this modern time the accurate reality of ages long gone by. We see it in the marvelous dexterity of mechanic art — which is but knowledge discovered and applied to affairs — and whose triumphs of ingenuity are netting the earth over with telegraphs and railroads, and dotting the whole globe with factories and laboratories of every name. The power of the human mind to search out knowledge in many of its departments, and by that search wonderfully to enlighten and benefit the race, is a power we need have no jealousy in acknowledging.

But with equal freedom does it become us to admit that there are other departments of knowledge, — and of knowledge vastly more essential to personal welfare, — to which our natural powers are not competent, and concerning which understanding must come to us, if it come at all, from another source. For the great problems are not those of History or of Science or of Mechanism. Not to academies, however learned, is it given to supply the deepest necessities of the soul. Science may sound the seas, but it has no plummet to tell us the depth of a man's spiritual want. History may reveal to us something of the process of outward events in ages past, — but my own future? That is another affair on which no History casts irradiating light. God's ways with matter I may in a measure discover ;

but His ways with me are of more account, and here human speculation leaves me ignorant.

Where am I to be, a few fleeting years hence? What condition is to enfold me, and by what circumstances is that condition to be modified, if by any? In what relation do I stand to that Power by whom I was brought hither, and by whom I am to be removed hence? How do these inward voices of fear and hope, and these senses of desert or ill-desert, gain their answer? Over against these undying longings or dreads within me, what outward realities are there to justify them? What obligations, if any, rest on me? What perils, if any, environ me? What hopes, if any, invite me? What destinies, if any, await me?

These are the great questions. It is knowledge on these matters that we most need to have. But on these matters all mere human wisdom is dumb. Science may "charm her secret from the latest moon"; but to the inquiry, "What and where is he who died yesterday?" it has nothing to reply. On all these deepest questions of the soul, whatever real light shines comes, not from History, Art, or Philosophy, but from Revelation. And that Revelation is chiefly in Jesus.

It is at this point, therefore, that Christ meets us. Here, where, if left to human wisdom, there is nothing but conjecture and uncertainty, He calls to us, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

It is on these personal problems of destiny and character that He sheds light. Respecting obligation and hope it is, that His are the words which quench our thirst. The import of life, the reality of accountability, the merely incidental character of death, the cer-



tainty of a hereafter, and the alternative issues of salvation or perdition — these are the questions concerning which knowledge without Him is most inaccessible, but upon which knowledge is all-important to gain. In satisfying, therefore, as He has and ever will satisfy, this great want of the soul, Christ vindicates one claim of His invitation, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

But man has another want beside knowledge. Eager as is man's desire for understanding, his longing is still more for love.

It is affection which makes about all the true blessedness there is in this world. It is the heart more than the head which attracts men to each other and renders life worth the living. True it is, indeed, that we occasionally encounter those in whom the loving instincts seem almost dead. All intellect, or all conscience, or all selfishness, affection appears to be a thing they neither need nor give. But it is doubtful whether even such apparent exceptions to that general law which makes the interchange of kindly emotions a necessity to human happiness, are very often absolute exceptions. There is hardly any one so abnormally moulded but that some juncture of experience reveals the yearning human heart. Nevertheless, even a seeming lack pays its appropriate penalty. The man who neither seems to crave nor give affection goes through life, admired or feared, it may be, but uncared for. Tears are not wasted on his grave. To human nature in general, love is the daily food. Got from some source, given to some object, it must be, or life is emptied of its value.

How pathetic, sometimes, is the testimony borne to



this fact in the affection which one frequently sees lavished upon some dumb animal or some insensible plant! It is, of course, very easy to smile at the devotion with which the recluse from society cherishes the dog which companions his wanderings, or the cat that purrs by her chair. But this devotion is only a witness that the human heart, frustrated of its natural objects of love, will yet make channels somehow for its goings forth. Something it must give and gain, even if the natural objects of its giving and receiving fail.

Does not this thought very vividly remind us that what we have called affection's "natural objects" are always liable to fail? Frustration takes hold on them. Friends vanish. Parents die. Associations in life are broken up. Society changes, so that one looks about him, after a little while, and finds himself among strangers. Even the philanthropic cause, which one adopts and makes the object of his care, some way seems to shift its bearings and fails to afford an adequate outgoing for the heart. Both in giving and receiving the channels choke. It is here that Christ comes to us, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." "I can satisfy an infinite affection. You, I love with an everlasting love. Your love I crave with a longing which will not die."

Ah! here is something more to me than knowledge. Christ is truth, and He offers Himself to satisfy my intellectual need. But there are hours when that is not what I want. Little, comparatively — great though the gift absolutely be — little, comparatively, matters it to me that so much knowledge comes to me through Him. What I want is not knowledge but love. He opens to me the life that is to be, it is true,

as no one else can do ; but what just now concerns me most is the life that is. Is there One who cares not merely for my to-morrow, but cares also for my to-day ? Is there One to stand by me in the hour of some great earthly calamity, some wreck of life and hope ? As I lay the little round head of my child in the silent grave, or deposit in that last resting place the pale, worn face of my mother or my sister, and feel the very heartstrings break as the dust rattles down upon the shut, forever-shut, casket ; or, as I stand paralyzed amid the wreck of life-long business labors and hopes, can I feel that there is a Love, which this great woe cannot alter ; nay, of which this woe may be but an evidence ?

My friends, it is just here where Christ's offer is fullest. It speaks to our disappointments as well as to our wants. It comes at the failing-point of all affections beside. For, alas, all beside do fail ! I utter no disparaging word of the might of human love. Sublime, noble, precious ; it is the best man can give to man. Yet, to a thoughtful mind, the reflection must often sadly come, how small the place is, after all, that we fill in our fellows' hearts. Even the great and good who have conferred lasting benefits on their kind, how quickly they are forgotten ! Statesman succeeds to statesman. Pastor follows pastor. Friend comes after friend. Time's tide sweeps everything forward, and submerges the memorials of the proudest or the dearest past.

How blessed, then, the remembrance that One abides whose love for us changes never ! One who forever gives and forever yearns to receive also ! One who, whatever may fade or alter or die, abides the

same. Nay, One who, in His infinite love for us, gathers up and keeps whatever is best in our human lives. One who cherishes the objects we have purely cared for, and makes them still dearer to us for His own sake! One in whom the lost is given back, and the vanished is restored to sight! Ah! if ever word was spoken in this world which loving hearts should rejoice to hear, it is this: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

But there is still one more want to which this offer of Christ addresses itself.

It is holiness. Greatest of all, this want of the soul. I have spoken of knowledge as one of man's chief necessities. It is so, but it is not so necessary as virtue. I have said that man needs affection. He does, but not so much as righteousness. To be pure is more important than to be wise; to be worthy of being loved is more essential than to be loved. True, indeed, it is,—and deplorable as it is true,—that this deepest need of man is not always man's deepest desire. The thing which is most required, is not certainly the thing most sought. Yet there is, at times, probably, in almost every breast, some sense, though it may be fitful and dim, of the necessity of holiness. Alienated from God as man is, there still remains in him a feeling of relationship; and of the obligation which it brings. There are chords in his heart which vibrate yet to touches from above.

Indeed, looking over the world, there are few things which have left deeper traces on the face of society, or on the history of individuals, than the efforts men have made to get into that moral state, which (under their various forms of faith) they have been taught to sup-

pose a state of righteousness. It matters nothing to our présent purpose that these conceptions of what such a state really is have been often greatly erroneous. We are speaking now of the fact that a sense of need has been in millions of hearts ; and that some effort, at least, has been made for its supply. And what efforts they have sometimes been ! How intense, how agonized, how terrible have been the expedients by which men have endeavored to solve this problem of becoming right within. They have starved in desert caves ; they have swung on iron hooks ; they have given their children to the fire ; they have shut themselves in monastery cells. No suffering has been too great to bear ; no self-denial too hard to sustain, by multitudes, in the attempt to satisfy the want within.

Ah ! my hearers, sitting in this sanctuary to-day, rejoicing in what we deem our better way, comes there not even from many of the errors we condemn in such as these, a voice of reproof and scorn ? Out even of Africa's lowest idolatry, out of Christianity's extremest perversion, sounds there not a cry which those who are at ease in Zion would do well to hear ? Not certain is it by any means, that we shall stand as well (with all our light and privilege) in the day when inquest for righteousness will be made, as do some of these who groped so earnestly, but in such darkness, after the answer to the question : " How shall a man be right with God ? " " How be right with God ? " That is the great, the awful problem of history.

Yet observe, how even at this late period of time, and amid what is called the enlightenment of our age, how powerless, even now, is science or philosophy to answer this question ! Philosophy can discourse pro-

foundly of the origin of ideas. But when I ask, "How can I get rid of this sense of sin?" she has not a syllable to reply. Science can analyze for me the ray of light which comes from one of Jupiter's moons, but how to unravel the twining fibres of evil that inmesh and make captive my trembling soul, she cannot tell.

There is only One who can tell. He tells us who stood in that Temple court at Jerusalem, on that eighth day of the festival, and said, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me." He answers the question, always, who ever lives to teach men how to become pure.

"Come unto Me," He says. "I have the gift you need. I forgive, and I also sanctify. In My death is your absolution; in My life is your recovery. By my sacrifice I have atoned for you; and by My rising again, I restore you. Come to Me. My example has in it healing. My holiness has in it purifying power. Rest upon Me; cling to Me; trust in Me; and the purity you need will become yours. My Spirit shall dwell in you. My grace shall transform you; and the great wants of your soul shall be satisfied; you shall be holy as I am holy." My friends, this is what that voice said which spoke the invitation so long ago: "Come unto Me and drink." This, nothing less than this, is what it promised and what it has performed in the experience of thousands.

Are there not those here who are athirst?

Is there not some one in this assembly who, perplexed by the conflicting voices of this jarring time, desires to know the truth? To him the invitation comes: "I am the truth, come to Me."

Are there those whose hearts' affections have been rudely smitten? Those who, wounded or bereaved, or misinterpreted or alone, are reaching outward somewhere for comfort and love? Listen to Him who says: "Come unto Me. Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee."

Is a longing for holiness the desire of any heart here? More than knowledge or love, does purity seem a precious thing? Better than heaven does it seem to be fit for heaven? Dearer than salvation is does the righteousness of salvation seem? Come then freely to Jesus. He cleanses the most sinful soul. The holiness in Him He makes ours also. "We all beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." "When He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

## IV.

## CHRIST'S HAPPINESS.\*

HEBREWS XII : 2.

*Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

The Christ of the world's most frequent contemplation is a humiliated and suffering Christ. On the walls of public galleries and private dwellings the eye meets, at every turn, the depicted story of our Saviour's woes. In this picture you behold Him an infant, for whom no room could be found in the inn, lying among the oxen of the stall. In that one, He is a man wearied with His pilgrimage, asking drink of a stranger at a well. Here you see Him weeping beside the grave of His friend Lazarus. There musing sorrowfully from the side of Mount Olivet, upon the fate of obdurate Jerusalem. Here He looks down upon us wearing the crown which Herod's men of war braided for Him ; its thorns lacerating His forehead. There, pressed to the earth by the weight of His cross, an imploring face appeals to us from the rabble that throngs Him on the way to Calvary. In scores of forms is the crucifixion scene, and the taking down from the cross, and the depositing in the sepul-

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\* Written in 1866. Somewhat rewritten in 1879.

chre, presented to us. Ancient and modern art have exhausted invention in setting forth,—by sculpture, by painting, by engraving, by mosaic, by fresco, by embroidery,—the narrative of the Redeemer's sorrow.

In like manner, religious literature has employed itself to a very considerable extent in giving utterance to the same plaintive tale. The ignominy and the sufferings of Jesus are the frequent theme of sermons in our sanctuaries, of volumes in our libraries, of stories in our nurseries.

But it is not to the image of a suffering Christ that I shall chiefly direct your attention to-day. Though that image is, indeed, a very prominent one in Scripture, and a most profitable one frequently to contemplate, it is one from which, on this occasion, I invite you to turn your eyes away. For it is not a suffering Christ only, who is presented to us in the Book of God. The countenance which looks out upon us very commonly, indeed, from the Scripture page, is one bearing indications of hardship. But there is a gleam of light in its most pensive expression. There is a forecast radiance of joy, even in its saddest hour. It was not sorrow only, which was appointed Him; there was a "glory to follow." Though the Captain of our salvation was to be "made perfect through sufferings," He was to be "made perfect." The day of suffering was to be ended. And if He was to "endure the cross" and submit to the "shame," there was a "joy set before Him," so great that the shame could be "despised" and the cross could be borne, as He looked forward to the "recompense of the reward."

Let us contemplate Him to-day as entered into that joy. Not, indeed, that the glory which was to follow



our Saviour's days of humiliation is yet made full. On the contrary, it is very far from being complete. There are reserves of that glory of which He has yet received no part. It is to later, to eternal days that we must look if we would contemplate our Redeemer made perfect in His blessedness. No ! it is not while these old heavens endure, and this old earth holds yet in its cold clasp the buried bodies of all His saints, that the fruition of our Saviour's rejoicings will arrive. The hour of that completed glory awaits the vanishing skies, the awakening graves, the descending Jerusalem of our Crowned King.

Nevertheless, though the day of His perfected blessedness still delays, and may delay yet many a revolving year, our Saviour has already begun to taste the "joy that was set before Him." Already He begins to reap the recompense of the reward. A happiness even now vast enough to fill His soul with rejoicing, and to task our feeble imagination to measure, is at every moment His.

Let us try to contemplate that joy. Turning our eyes away for awhile from a suffering, look we to a rejoicing Christ. Let us forget ourselves,—our little griefs, our petty cares, our earthly burdens,—and lifting our eyes above this dim vale in which we so often sit and weep, get a little vision, if we can, of the happiness of Christ.

His, then, is the happiness of a finished atoning work.

There is a satisfaction in completed labor, however humble that labor may be. The husbandman at the close of autumn, and the sailor at the end of his voyage, look back with gladness that the labors and

buffetings of another rounded period of their lives are over. The mechanic rejoices to lay down his plane at the end of his protracted work. With a kindred feeling of satisfaction the author writes "Finis" on his concluding page. And just in the degree in which any undertaking is high and difficult, in that degree does he who bears its burden rejoice at its close. How welcome to the heart of Washington must have been the last scene of the revolutionary struggle, when the capitulation of Cornwallis brought rest to the worn-out land! What joy, amid his anxieties, must have come to the heart of the martyred Lincoln, in those last few days which brought him tidings of Richmond's fall and Lee's surrender; of the Union's established triumph, and his completed work.

It is, indeed, a great step from matters like these up to that achievement our Saviour wrought when He atoned for human guilt. Yet even things like these may help us to understand His joy when that task was done. For, once, like any human undertaking, that work lay before Him unaccomplished. There it was; a thing to be done. It was to be the mightiest enterprise the world had ever witnessed; and He, Christ Jesus, was to be its fulfiller. The brunt and the struggle were to be His. All its comprehensible and incomprehensible tasks of effort or endurance, He was to accomplish. From Jordan's baptismal stream to Golgotha's cross-topped hill was one untraversed pathway, overhung by mysteries of conflict and of suffering. The things He was to do by the labors of His hands, by the pleadings of His voice, by His body's lacerated wounds, were to be only dim external signs of the overcomings or endurings of His soul. There,

within, where no eye could see, was the strain and severity of His enterprise. The visible facts of His sad story were significant mainly as tokens of the invisible hardships of a work which once lay all before Him.

But it lies before Him no longer. Redemption is not now any more a task to be accomplished. Behind Him it lies; a thing finished forever. There is Bethlehem, where never again is He to be cradled in a herdsman's stall. There is Nazareth, whose toilsome years will nevermore acquaint His hands with the hammer and the plane. There is Galilee, over whose stony hills, footsore and weary, He journeys no longer on errands of rejected love. Behind Him lies Jerusalem, whose Hall of Judgment saw Him once a prisoner condemned; and Gethsemane, where He fainted in His spiritual agony; and Calvary, which lifted Him expiring into the darkening air; and the sepulchre on its slope where was laid to its brief repose the body of the murdered man.

There they are: but for Him they are no more. Once, every day brought them nearer to Him; now, every day bears them farther off. Once, things of anticipation and foreboding; now they are things of memory and reckoning-points of success. He looks back on the whole sad, toilsome, mysterious story, as a thing done completely, victoriously, forever. And now,—if we may compare small things with great,—as a conqueror rests when the field is won, as the swimmer reposes when he reaches the hard-gained shore, as the man of years' long endeavor gives over his toil when the task is complete, so rests the Redeemer from His finished work. A happy rest! from labor mightily ac-

complished! A repose whose zest is proportioned to the former pain. A gladness too great for us to measure, who have never fathomed the sorrow, is, and forevermore will be, the inheritance of Christ.

Christ's, again, is the happiness of manifested character. It is not an object of unworthy ambition for a man, conscious of unusual capacity in affairs, or of a noble integrity and largeness of soul, to desire opportunity to show of what stuff he is made. It surely was not an unfortunate circumstance in the life of the Duke of Wellington, that those five long hours of terrible suspense and dogged endurance, while Napoleon's regiments swept down upon him, and Blücher did not come, gave England and the world a chance to see what material God sometimes puts into a man. The prisons and poorhouses of Europe were woes which haunted the soul of Howard like ghosts which could not be laid. But, had not those wrongs been, mankind would never have known what a great heart lodged in that feeble frame. Florence Nightingale would have died unheard of, had it not been for the Crimean war. And if the battles of Sadowa, Gravelotte, and Sedan had not revealed it, who could have pronounced the Prussian Moltke the first soldier of his age?

From the days of the primitive martyrdoms down to the last sufferer for principle, whether on public or private stage, the disclosure of character is mainly the office of adversity. As our great dramatist says, "In the reproof of chance lies the true proof of men." For not always is a man's life so cast that he can show what is in him. There are other true souls than this world always hears of. The plaintive words of the author of the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, mourn-

ing over those to whom life never gave the chance that might have revealed what, if revealed, would never have been let die, are truer than we always remember. Yes, favoring opportunity is a privilege. The chance to be manifested is one of life's best chances. It is not, indeed, that he may be manifest, that the true man works. It is a felicity which comes to him, if it comes at all, rather in the retrospect than in the performance of his task. If he can look back on it from the end, conscious of the integrity with which he has wrought, the fact that his work has permitted him to show that his heart was true, and his motives pure, must be esteemed a happy circumstance. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me," said the aged tent-maker at Miletus. Would he have lightly sold, or ought he to have lowly esteemed, the possibility of making that humble boast?

Yet all other manifestations of character beside, do they not, even the brightest, ask for a veil of oblivion forever to cover them, compared with Christ's? Among the joys which fill His heart looking back on His earthly history, must not this be one, that His was a record in every emergency, from which nothing needs to be taken, in which nothing needs to be deplored, to which nothing can be added—the perfect record of the Perfect Man. And this, remember, not because it was passively and necessarily so. No! unless the temptations which assailed our Saviour were illusive spectacles, and the hardships He sustained were hollow make-believes, it was not inevitable that the record He left behind Him should be that of the

only "spotless soul that ever breathed through human clay." It was by effort He wrote that memorial which blinds our eyes by its brightness. He was what He was, by struggle and conflict. He was put to the proof as no man beside was ever proved. Tried by humiliation, tried by suffering, tried by satanic wiles, tried by desertions of His God, He stood steadfast. He proved His character in the furnace flame. He won His character by struggle.

Now, from the heavenly rest into which He has entered, He looks back on the only example earth can show of a sinless character and a perfect life. Not a virtue men prize, but it is there. Not a strength they admire, but it is there. Not a heroism they honor, a self-denial they revere, a beauty they cherish, a grace they love, but it shines — tested to the uttermost — in the character of Christ. To them forever it is an example too high to attain, but ceaselessly to emulate; to Him it is a joy the sweetness of which can never die.

Christ's again, is the happiness of the perpetual dispensation of good.

It was one of Christ's own utterances in the days of His earthly experience, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Days of His "experience," I say, for those were days when to minister to Christ's urgent and painful wants was a possible thing to do. Undoubtedly he spoke out of His experience. To Him it was a more blessed thing to give than to gain. How oftener fell the word of gentle greeting from His lips than it fell upon His ear! How more frequent the stretching forth of His hands to minister to others than theirs to comfort Him! And yet He knew some-

thing of benefits received. There were those who gave Him shelter, food, and raiment. One there was who washed His feet with tears and wiped them with her hair. He knew enough of the satisfaction of being helped to be able experimentally to say whether it is better to give or to receive. And He has told us how He found it. He has let us know what, as He tested life, was the best good in it. He has shown whether it was the wiping of another's tears or the drying of His own which was best to Him. The Son of Man, He says, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

And because that was the spirit in which He did His work, and the law by which He died, now that He has entered into His reward, He has become the dispenser of perpetual good to all the inhabitants of heaven. Not a ransomed soul in all the ranks of the blest, but He is the giver of the joy. Not one of all the innumerable host, but came to those happy seats by Him. As He looks around Him on the throng, He knows there is not one of them that His blood did not buy, His sacrifice atone for, His grace redeem. Not a foot treads the golden pavement which was not guided thither by His care. Not a tongue lifts up the song of praise, but it tells of salvation wrought by Him. The garments of light in which the ransomed stand, the harps of thanksgiving they hold, the inward peace and sense of reconciliation they know, all are His gift. He gives, and none can pay Him again. His bestowals overpass all possibility of requital. Forever, among the multitudes out of every tongue and clime, He must remain the Man most perfectly blest, because most perfect in making blest. Unspeakably, immeas-



urably happy, He lives the example which makes all others dim, of the greater joy it is to give than to receive.

Once more, Christ's is the happiness of personal fellowship with the spirits of His ransomed ones in heaven.

Just where that heaven is into which the Saviour entered at His ascension, we cannot tell. Whether the place—for a place it would appear to be since He went thither in His proper body—is the same with that which will be the final abode of the redeemed after their bodies shall have been raised from the grave, there is reason to doubt. Many things in the Word of God would seem to indicate that the place of that final abode of the saints may be this earth where we now dwell, regenerated, transformed, made new by the baptism of purifying fire. But, however that may be, the Scripture seems also to give us intimations that in that same place where Jesus now is, there His disembodied saints now are with Him. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," said Christ to the dying companion of His crucifixion sufferings. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with Me where I am," said the Saviour in the same prayer in which He also said, "And now I come to Thee."

Where Christ now is, there are the spirits of the just. Joined with Him in happy fellowship, they await the hour when the last trumpet shall summon the grave to give up its charge, and the ransomed spirit shall unite with its ransomed and transformed clay. But even now the happiness of that fellowship to Him and them, who shall measure? Certainly it is immeasurable to them. Many of them left happy homes to



enter there ; but not one so happy that the emancipated spirit has not learned that, sweet as were any joys of earth, to "depart and be with Christ is far better."

But to Him also that fellowship is precious. These are those He has redeemed. By His own blood He has bought them. Every grace that shines in them is the product of His care. With rejoicing inexpressible He dwells among them and smiles on them. And His, remember, is a fellowship which is every hour increasing. With every revolving day of earthly time, the number of that blissful companionship multiplies. Ransomed ones are welcomed home from every region of the populated globe. Here is one from Syria, land of the Saviour's birth and burial. Here is one from Italy, land of the Roman power which crucified Him. Here is one from Africa, country of the man who bore the Saviour's cross on the way to Golgotha. Here come those from China, Greenland, and America, regions unconjectured by even apostolic ken, but enfolded in the purpose of forgiving grace, and gathered in the arms of atoning sacrifice. Every hour they come. Old age and infancy. Wearied with care, or called with all earth's joys before them. From palaces, from hovels. Of every color, lineage, tongue. A thronging, multiplying, exultant host. And over them all He sits welcoming, blessing, blessed.

Faint and inadequate is human speech to utter, even that little the human thought can conjecture of a happiness so great ! His work accomplished, His character made gloriously manifest, the dispenser of infinite good, the rejoicing companion of His redeemed, our imagination falters in the attempt to conceive the

height and the depth of a joy no soul in the universe but that of Christ could compass, as none but His deserves.

But, marvelous as is the happiness of Christ, forget not, my hearers, that to every one of you the privilege of adding to it is given. Yes! blessed beyond conception as is our Redeemer, you can increase that blessedness. Give yourself to Him, if you have never given. Give yourself more unreservedly if you have ever made a partial surrender, and an added joy will thrill through His already rejoicing soul. You will lend a new element to even the happiness of Christ.

## V.\*

## AMBITION FOR NOBLE SERVICE.

## II TIMOTHY II : 20, 21.

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold ana of silver, but also of wood and of earth ; and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

One of the most powerful motives which has ever influenced the minds of men is ambition. And it is not one of the most powerful only, but one of the most pervasive also. It is a motive which, to some extent, affects all minds. The objects toward which this passion is directed, are, indeed, almost infinitely various. It ranges over the whole breadth of human life and action. The distance from the ambition of a Bismarck eager to raise Prussia to the position of dictator in the affairs of Europe, to the ambition of Hanlon equally eager to outrow any other champion of the boating fraternity, only very imperfectly indicates the scope of the sentiment under consideration. For it is a sentiment which has no limits inside the aims and occupations of universal humanity. Newton's aspiration to solve the mathematic problem of gravity, and the Sioux Indian's ambition to shine in the superior hid-

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\* Written in 1869. Somewhat rewritten in 1877.

eousness of his red paint, are both illustrations of the same sentiment. Ambition to leave behind him a poem of immortal memory prompted the lofty muse of the blind singer of *Paradise Lost*. It is equally ambition which incites the schoolboy on the lower bench to conquer the abstruse perplexities of the multiplication table.

Now this aspiring sentiment, so instinctive and universal, derives its moral quality from the objects toward which it is directed. In itself, and as an abstract matter, it is neither good nor bad. It is simply one of the great natural impulses of man, which can be made useful or harmful, right or wrong, by its direction. Just as the physical capacity of moving the arm may be made the instrument, in one case, of an act of benevolence, and in another, of an act of cruelty, so this sentiment of aspiration, equally neutral in itself, derives its moral character from the result at which it aims.

We are, indeed, very much accustomed to see this impulse of man's nature directed toward questionable or evil objects. Ambition is a motive power too often subverted to Satan's uses. The very name has come to have a kind of sinister sound. But there is nothing in the impulse of aspiration itself which involves any necessity of evil direction. Satan has no claim upon it, as belonging characteristically to him or his service. It belongs to God. It is an agency in His service. It has its scope and function in the aims and occupations of piety, as truly as in those of worldliness.

The Gospel claims this agency. It is one to which it makes continual appeal. Ambition has a place in religion. The aspiration for something rich and high

and distinctive is an aspiration encouraged in scores of utterances of the Book of God. At the same time, also, that Book defines the proper field, and regulates the right exercise of this sentiment. It stimulates its activity, and it guides its powers. It at once incites and directs. Our text is an example in point :

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth ; and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Two things in this passage must at once strike the attentive hearer.

One of them is the boldness with which the sentiment of ambition is appealed to in it. The other is the clearness with which it points out the sphere of that sentiment's proper exercise. These two things, then, let us a few moments contemplate. Christian ambition : its object and obligation. And first of the object.

"In a great house" — the Apostle tells us, — there are vessels of many substances and many uses. The materials of some of them are precious and they subserve noble purposes. The materials of others are common and they subserve inferior ends. But they are all useful. Even the meanest of them in substance and in intention has its utility. It has a function. Its purpose is for service. So, too, however various the specific aspirations of Christian ambition, they are all shut up under the general requirement of utility. The allowable objects of Christian aspiration are such as relate to service. Personal enjoyment, even if it be of a religious kind, is a thing which the Scriptures do

not give us much encouragement to make the direct object of search. Mere happiness is a thing the Scriptures hold very cheap. Usefulness, efficiency, are the things they prompt us to. Equipment and capacity for spiritual service,—these are the objects of Christian desire. Ambition for these is a sacred passion.

But there are differences in spiritual service. There is the use which the earthen vessel may, perhaps, adequately serve ; and there is the use which can appropriately be fulfilled only by the golden urn. In other words, Christian usefulness is a most various matter. It is a thing calling for very dissimilar capacity and refinement in the instruments. There are spiritual functions which can, in a manner, be discharged by the possessors of only a relatively low and undeveloped piety. But they are comparatively unimportant functions. While, on the other hand, the functions of noblest utility and benignest benefits, can only be fulfilled by possessors of ardent piety and rich experience.

The sphere of Christian ambition, then, is in seeking these higher endowments to fit for higher service. It is a legitimate object of desire to seek the largest possible capability of use. The widened mind, the sympathetic heart, the persuasive tongue, the quick-discerning spiritual instinct,—these are to be sought, because these fit their possessor for greater employment in the Lord's work. We can none of us hope to be more than instruments in the Spirit's hands.

But there is a choice in the instruments, as the various works to be performed are of differing delicacy and difficulty. And Christian ambition finds its proper object in fitness for those higher uses. Meetness for the Lord's best work, adaptedness

of mind and heart and will to the noblest service in which God condescends to use men in this world, this is a Christian's true and highest object of aspiration. Compared with this, desire for mere personal religious comfort or security is ignoble. Measured by this longing for endowment for the Lord's use, any longing for simply individual happiness or hope is selfish and mean. That it is religious, makes it none the less so.

Such being, then, the true object of Christian ambition, turn a moment to consider with equal brevity the obligation of pursuing it.

The duty of seeking this object arises from the possibility. It is argument enough to urge the obligation of striving after a high endowment for the Lord's service that a man can strive and that striving has its result. The whole question is settled by the simple fact that equipment for the higher forms of Christian usefulness is very much a matter of choice and endeavor. Adaptedness of mind and heart to the nobler services of the Gospel is a thing which, to a great extent, falls within the scope of voluntary effort. Of this we have an intimation in the text. "If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Preparation unto higher work,—sanctification unto more honorable uses,—these are the rewards held out to voluntary endeavor to purge one's self from defiling influences, and to present one's self perfectly to the Lord's service. It is a thing which can be done. Fitness for better and worthier work is the prize of effort and self-consecration. The vessels of the Lord's



house are not like those of our own, unchangeably ordained to high or to menial ends. These human vessels have a capacity of change. They can alter in character and advance in use. The earthen may become golden ; the wood may turn to silver. And with that progressive change will come, also, an enhancing honorableness in the employment to which the Master will put them.

What transformations Christian experience has seen ! What alterations of substance ! What exaltations in use ! Under the power of Divine grace and the high ambition to serve increasingly sacred ends, what earthen vessels have been made golden censers in the Temple of God ! Saul of Tarsus, and Paul the Apostle ; Bunyan the wandering mender of kettles and pots, and Bunyan the Pilgrim's guide to heaven ; Newton the captain of a slave ship, and Newton the preacher of the Gospel and singer of sweet songs of devotion ; Chalmers the formal unconsecrated minister, and Chalmers the great modern Apostle of Scotland,—these illustrate the marvel of that change by which the wood and earth of our humanity may be fitted to services more sacred than the shining bowls upon the altar of the ancient tabernacle.

Nay, in the more familiar precincts of church and of household life, how often have we seen this same transformation wrought ! With what distinctness have we beheld the alteration effected by the Divine Spirit in the whole character of some one whom God has touched with the high ambition to become useful in the world. Under the influence of that endeavor, how have intellect quickened, and emotion deepened, and capacity enlarged. How has the stammering utterance



become eloquent, and the trembling step grown strong. You behold the progressive change. Before your very eyes the earthen bowl of some poor common human spirit becomes a burnished vessel of God's altar, and filled with fragrances of grace, sweeter than frankincense and myrrh. Changes like these are open to endeavor. They are the result and the reward of effort. Christian aspiration can attain to them, and the duty of aspiration lies in that fact.

I call attention, therefore, in the practical enforcement of this theme, to one or two thoughts of a direct and personal character. Especially do I invoke the careful consideration of the young to suggestions suited, I think, to the position of privilege in which they stand.

One of these suggestions is the duty resting on every person to aim at high and worthy service. It is a Christian privilege, and no less a Christian duty, also, to be ambitious in this matter. The spirit of the Gospel encourages large anticipations. There is nothing repressive and narrow about it. It begets a divine discontent with low attainments and with successes scantier than opportunity.

To be sure, in prompting to larger endeavors the Gospel does not, as we are too apt to do, underestimate and despise little things. No! it has a great reverence for little things, and it looks for an exact and painstaking carefulness respecting them. It requires, also, if one is, in the providence of God, rigidly shut up to a trivial task and a narrow and unchangeable lot in life, that he be content as well as faithful where he is. Nay, more, that he do his work, however lowly, with an assured confidence that it is accepted work:—

work appointed, valued, and honored by Him in whose service it is done.

But, on the other hand, the Gospel encourages the aim, wherever it can find scope,—and few are the lives wherein it cannot,—for higher endowment and fuller service. It says, in effect, to all of its disciples “Do better things ; do better things !” Do not be content with trifles. Be not satisfied with but little. Work faithfully in your sphere, and widen it if you can. Go forward steadfastly, and, if possible, go somewhat upward, too. Seek for higher labors ; and seek to be qualified for them by being lifted up yourself. The wider mind, the warmer heart, the stronger faith, the more persuasive tongue, seek for these things, that you may use them, on an ever heightening plane, and in a continually widening sphere. And that you may make this progress, use the gifts you now have.

Suppose they are small. They will grow by exercise. Do not be daunted out of your greatest privilege—the privilege of growing strong and equipped in the Lord’s service. The condition of that growth is present endeavor. Use the gift, and the gift will increase. Surely it is not the vessel content to be forever the vessel of wood, that ever becomes the golden censer “sanctified and meet for the Master’s use.”

There is another suggestion of a very serious character, which arises from the subject now in hand. This is a suggestion as to the danger of base uses of that vessel of the human soul, which a man hopes to present to the service of God. It is a matter of familiar observation among the neat-handed conductors of household affairs, that the soundest utensil may become permanently dishonored by the use to which it is, per-

haps, accidentally subjected. The firkin is ruined by its contents. The earthen jar, despite whatever efforts at cleansing, gives out the taint which has sunk into it from what it has been made to hold. The casket, air it ever so long, never loses the scent of the musk spilled inadvertently upon it. And in many such cases, a permanent degradation of function is the consequence. The vessel, whatever it may be, can never again be used for the highest services. Outwardly unchanged and perfect, it is, nevertheless, lastingly unfitted for the best uses. A secret debasement, from which it can never recover, condemns it perpetually to a lower employment and to more menial disposals.

Now something terribly like this, although the parallel is of course not perfect, takes place also in the spiritual vessels of human souls. There is a peril of permanent degradation lying in too long and too willing subjection to the influences of evil. Sinful habits and appetites carry with them a tremendous and far-reaching peril. There is a danger, sad to contemplate, of a lasting incapacity, if not, indeed, for some service,—yet for the highest and best service in the work of the Lord. Earthliness and frivolity are not matters of transient influence. The loss which they sometimes inflict is not limited to those days only in which the individual yielded himself with apparent willingness to their power. It reaches often far beyond. It takes hold upon a time when a far different hope incites him, and an altered spirit impels. So that, even then, when the man, touched by the Spirit of God, eagerly seeks to be of service in God's work, when it has become his ambition to be a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use, even then how sadly, oftentimes, does he

reap the consequences of his long enthrallment to a baser service. His soul gives out the scent of its older associations. Cleansed never so earnestly, the taint of the contents it has held so long is in it still. It cannot be of the use it might have been. Not useless need it be, but not a vessel to the highest service. It may fulfil many an important function, but it cannot hold the anointing oil.

O my hearers! there is a solemn truth here, which it becomes you to remember. These souls of ours are not so simply wrought, that a moment's repenting, or a determined resolve, nor even the direct operations of divine grace, can wholly wipe out the influences of our past, and enable us to enter on a new life untouched by inheritances from the old. It is not so. What we have been affects what we are to be. You cannot, my hearers, spend a youthtime of idle vanity and then come fitted and sanctified to a Christian's better service. However sincere your repenting, you must inevitably bear something of the loss of your foolish years. You cannot, O man of business, and I will suppose, professor of religion, too, you cannot immerse yourself in worldly things, and heap up your heart overflowing full with material desires, and then come clean and fit for the best uses of the Lord's altar. Beware, then, of a permanent loss! There are uses from which the human spirit can never fully be restored. The dishonored vessel can, in this life certainly, never be cleansed to become fitted to the Master's highest use.

The word of entreaty comes to all, in whatever position you now stand. "Purge yourselves to nobler services!" The past, whatever its character, is unaltera-

ble. The present, only, is your certain possession. Cleanse yourselves for the best uses that remain. It is no longer now a question what noble uses you might have served. The only question left is, what uses can you serve. And high services remain. There are noble functions to be fulfilled. Aspire to them. Set your mark high. Purify yourselves that you may be fitted for them.

Ah ! my beloved hearer, especially my hearer in the period of youth, there is a sacred encouragement for you to do this. The alchemy of divine grace does wondrous things. More marvelous are its changes than those fabled of the magic workers of old. The heart early and fully submitted to God can be fitted to most sacred functions. A progressively refining influence adapts it for higher and higher service. Nearer and nearer to the altar it can come ; closer and closer to the glory and the sacrifice. It may be made, among the vessels of the sanctuary, like that which holds the sacramental bread, or the chalice which conveys to longing lips the redemptive drops of Calvary. I commend this sacred ambition to you. " If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work."

## VI.

## YOKE WEARING.\*

MATTHEW XI: 29.

*"Take my yoke upon you."*

Most men, when they seek to bring others to new opinions or unfamiliar labors, are tempted a little to conceal whatever displeasing aspects there may be about those opinions or labors, and to bring prominently into the foreground only the agreeable matters. If a man is attempting to sell you anything, you are pretty sure that its merits rather than its defects will have a full disclosure. It would be a somewhat novel method of solicitation to put into the forefront of the interview the dissuasives from compliance.

Yet something which seems very much like doing this characterized Christ's way, not unfrequently, in His appeals to men. Our text is an example in point. "Take my yoke upon you," He says. The words are immediately coupled, indeed, with one of the most tender and persuasive of His promises: "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." But that promise, sweet and inviting as it is, is prefaced by this condition, "Take my *yoke* upon you."

Christ invites us to Himself; but He has no inten-

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\* Written in 1869.

tion of deceiving us into coming. He gives us fair notice beforehand of our conditions of approach and our treatment after we are arrived. He lets us plainly know that it is not to any mere holiday acquaintance that He summons us. Matchless as are the blessings He has to give, and tender beyond conception as is the love which prompts His proffer of them to us, He yet never deludes us into mistaking the terms. With perfect and translucent honesty He lets us know the whole case. He prefaces His pledge with its condition. He deals with us squarely, intelligibly. He puts things as they are. "Take my yoke upon you; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

And, after all, notwithstanding the general tendency of men to put the best side out in dealing with their fellowmen, they do like honesty in others. They are glad to know just what they can depend upon. They prefer to touch bottom, even if the bottom be ragged and rocky, rather than to hang over uncertain depths. And so it awakens a kind of confidence in itself, that Christ's invitation comes just as it does. He puts,—if I may say so,—the worst side out. He conceals nothing. He does not use smooth phrases to gloss over rough facts. He chooses plain words, which convey the unmistakable truth.

He tells us that He will give us "rest"; but the condition of it is our bearing a "yoke." Not a badge, not a necklace, not a ribbon, not an epaulet,—but a yoke. Just that lowly, laborious, constraining thing which we bind upon the unquestioning dumb creatures which patiently turn the sward of our meadows and drag home the heavy-loaded wagon of our harvest fields. And yet He tells us that wearing this yoke



will bring us "rest." Notwithstanding it is a yoke, we shall find it "easy."

Let us think of this matter a little. Let us consider a few moments just what this yoke-bearing does symbolize and signify. Perhaps we shall find that He who was accustomed to speak "as never man spake," did not depart from His custom even in this case. Perhaps we may come to see how the shortest and the surest way for any of us who are troubled and "weary," to find peace and "rest," is to do just this thing the Master bids us,—put on the yoke of His true discipleship.

Notice as one thing, then, that the yoke of Christ signifies submission.

True Christian experience has many points of variation. The diversity of men's temperament and of their histories lays the foundation for an almost endless diversity of detail in the particular items of religious feeling which may characterize equally sincere Christians. But there are a few great points which are substantially identical. Among them is this of submission of self to Christ.

Inquirers after the religious life sometimes come asking: "Must I have just such an experience as I read of in such a memoir, or hear described by such a brother or sister of the church, before I may regard myself as a Christian?" "No," I answer, "I have no warrant to affirm that: nor have you any need to delay your hope because your experience does not in all points agree with that of any living soul. But there is one thing you must have. Underneath all possible diversities, true Christian experience does involve submission to Christ. Surrender,—that cannot be dis-



pensed with. However various may be other emotions,—the sense of guilt, for example, or the fear of retribution,—this feeling, the soul truly taking hold of Christ will have; a feeling of its helpless need of Him, and an utter giving up of self to Him. Surrender, yielding, putting on His yoke, that is the one central and essential fact of Christian experience.

I said “Christian experience,” my hearers; but now I say that human experience knows nothing more blessed than just that experience of surrender. Christ said it would bring “rest,” and it does bring it. For it is not self-assertion, victory, achievement, which brings us our truest bliss. Our self is too mean, our victories too small, our achievements too pitiable for them ever to be a really contenting satisfaction. Our best joy is in yielding to and reverencing something nobler and better than ourselves. We get glimpses of the blessedness of this submission in the relationships of the present. The really filial child is gladder by far in yielding his ignorant will to the wiser will of his parent, than in blindly asserting his own. Our subtle poet, Tennyson,—writing of the relation of friend to friend in the mere giving and receiving of knowledge,—says:—

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows?

So, too,—though on a vastly higher plane, and with a self-surrender infinitely more complete,—there is no one act of possible human experience so full of rest and sweetness as the act of entire self-surrender to

Christ. Looking out of its weakness to His strength, out of its sin to His holiness, out of its loss to His plenitude of help, and utterly casting itself upon Him, the soul of man is touched with an indescribable calm and joy. The act is an exceeding humble one, but no proud achievements ever brought such results.

Notice another point. The yoke of Christ signifies restraint. The wearer of a yoke is one under control. He has upon him the symbol of a government.

And Christ suffers no one who comes to Him to evade this condition of discipleship. All who are His are under His direction. Let no man make a mistake on this point, and imagine that all that Christ requires of him is some single act of submission, and that after that he is free to make his own laws and go his own way. Christ tells us plainly otherwise when He says: "Take my yoke upon you." That direction means not something transient, not something gone by, not something which can be put off and taken on at choice. It means the constant, life-long control and guidance of a law supreme over personal will, of an authority unquestioned and unquestionable in its claims.

Now just here, undoubtedly, it is not unfrequent to see an obstinate will make a stand. If it were only a question of momentary homage, of an act done once under the pressure of an intense emotion, and then things were to be as before, such a will perhaps would be inclined to submit. But to enter into a compact of eternal obedience, to enthrone an authority whose legislation shall reach to all events of life, this it hesitates to do. And exceedingly stout, sometimes, are the words one hears from that small mote in God's universe called "man," in denunciation of such sub-

jection to restraint, as "mean," "craven," "unworthy." Yet is submission to rightful authority mean? Is obedience to wise law craven? Is it an unworthy thing to do, to yield to a command which withholds merely from evil? Is a government which constrains a man only to his good, and restrains him only from his harm, just the kind of government against which peremptorily to rebel?

It is not so! It is obedience to wise rule which is the noble thing. It is acquiescence in kind restraint which is the thing of privilege. The freedom to obey behests worthy to be obeyed is the freedom which one needs.

So when Christ comes to us saying "Take my yoke upon you," He utters a command indeed, but a command which is as sweet as any promise. It is a law certainly. It has all the attributes of a statute. It searches deep, it reaches wide, it is rigorous and escapeless in its control. But it is a law which has a heart. It seeks our welfare more tenderly than does a mother, and not a behest it utters but has its motive in our good.

And so it is that the man who wears the yoke of Christ is the man at peace. Law, indeed, holds him; but holds him to the right. The rule of the Master restrains him; but it restrains him only from wrong. And the more completely he knows himself the more he sees his need of such a law. The main solicitude he feels is to see, not on how few, but on how many of the affairs of life, he may discern that Law of Christ, exercising its restrictive and constraining sway.

But, as one point more, observe that the yoke of Christ signifies employment.

The patient yoke-bearers of the ploughing time or of the harvest-days are harnessed thus not to express subjection, but to fulfil service. The end of yoke-wearing is utility. And it is in Christian life as in the tillage of the fields. Christ calls men to take His yoke upon them that they may do His work. He has use for His people. The vocation to which He summons them is one of labor. So far, certainly, as the earthly aspect of His calling of men is concerned, the chief object He has in view is to gain, in every new disciple of His Gospel, a new worker in His cause.

Here again, doubtless, we find men oftentimes making a stand. If a submission to Christ's yoke were only a passive matter,—something that could be just quietly experienced, something which interfered with no other plans, and required no strenuous and outgoing endeavors,—there are those who now decline it, who might be not unwilling to put it on. But putting on the yoke is not a matter like that. It is no thing of mere passive experience or holiday pastime. It is equipment for labor. It is a harnessing of the whole man to earnest and lifelong employment. And Christ leaves no room for doubt that it is just to that quality and duration of service that He summons every disciple. He entraps no one into an unexpected method or intensity of occupation. His call is open and unmistakable: "Take my yoke upon you."

But in requiring this does He frustrate men's hope of happiness? Does he make impossible the realization of the promise: "I will give you rest," which in the self-same utterance He couples with His command? Oh! how little they know of the blessedness of Christian serving who think so! How little that

man can have entered into the secret of self-sacrifice, and the sweet mystery of labor for Christ, who supposes that yoke-bearing in the Gospel is a sorrowful and dejecting thing!

Ask the sun-browned toilers who have gone forth from English and American homes to bear to equatorial climes the better manners and the purer faith of our Christian lands. Ask the earnest Gospel laborer among ourselves whether in the public or the private sphere, in the pulpit or in the market, in the home-circle, or in the Sabbath-school. Ask your own heart, professed follower of the Lord Jesus, as you recall the better moments and the most satisfying actions of your life. There is but one answer: "His yoke is easy and His burden is light!" The toil of the Lord is blessedness and repose. Though in it the "outward man" may "perish," the "inward man" is "renewed day by day." And when, from the last confine and boundary of mortal life, the departing soul looks backward to find the best of its earthly hours, it will find it in that one in which it bore most patiently and laboriously the Saviour's yoke. Then it will not be the day of self-pleasing and refusal of service which will be the day of happy remembrance, nor will that day be remembered as having been the happiest in its passing flight. That place will be filled in memory by the day,—whatever its outward weariness or adversity,—in which you did the truest and hardest service of your life for Christ.

One practical inquiry comes to us before we end.

We have seen that the yoke of Christ signifies to us submission, restraint, employment. These are three important, and, as I have endeavored also to show,

three most happy experiences. But when ought they to be experienced? What time is the best time to take on that yoke of submission, restraint, and employment, to which the Saviour summons us?

I will answer first for those of mature years in this congregation. For them the answer is "at once." Now is the time to do it; and for this plain reason, if for no other, that there is no other time in which it can be done. Life has already largely gone. There is only a narrow margin of earthly duration left. And if the great experience of submission to Christ is yet unmet, there is only a brief fragment of existence remaining in which it possibly can be met. If His restraining and transforming sway has not yet been felt upon the soul, there are only a few more years, or it may be months, in which it can be felt. If employment in His service has never begun, the period of service can at the utmost be but short. The shadow of sunset is already slanting eastward. Therefore now is the time. To the more aged of this assembly, the admonition comes with the solemnity of an injunction which knows no alternative and can admit of no delay. Take the yoke of Christ upon you, and at once!

But for the young? What is the time when the young should come to those experiences of submission, restraint, and employment, which are implied in a true bearing of the yoke of Christ? For a different reason from that which has just been assigned in the case of the old, but a reason almost equally cogent, the same answer must be given. The time is "now." The yoke of Christ, in all its completeness of meaning, should be taken on at once.

For, my youthful hearers, if the bearing of the yoke

of Christ is, as He asserts, a privilege, an honor, and a satisfaction surpassing all others, then the sooner you assume and the longer and more faithfully you wear that symbol of a true discipleship, the better and happier for you. And why should you delay? Why should some of you who stand outside the Church's precincts, longer postpone the submission of yourselves to the will of Christ and the yielding of your lives to His guiding and restraining hand? And why should others of you who are numbered of the visible fellowship withhold yourselves from the active employments of His service, and decline to press hard and patiently against the yoke you already profess to wear?

Why is it so? Oh! my friends, it makes a Christian pastor sad and sick at heart to receive the answers to this question which he frequently does receive from the lips of some. You excuse yourselves because you are young. It is offered as an apology for a declination of active and consecrated yoke-bearing for Christ, that you are yet in the morning of life. Of such, it is urged, a full and earnest devotion is not to be expected. To ask for sober and manly and unwavering consecration to the service of Jesus is to expect too much of those so young!

So young! As if Christ's salvation were a salvation for gray hairs alone! As if Christ's love could enter and fill an aged heart only! As if Christ's grace was not adapted to renew and empower a man or woman till failing years had sapped the body's vigor and dulled the appetites for earthly joy! So young! As if that were not the very reason rather why you might with most appropriateness and success devote yourselves to the honor and the privilege of Christ's blessed service!



As if, instead of being a hindrance, youth were not a special argument to urge immediate entrance on a labor so full of an undecaying happiness and reward!

Yet if it were possible to regard a certain extremity of youthfulness as, indeed, affording a valid excuse from earnest devotion to Christ's service, is this an excuse which can avail for many of you? What tokens of devotion to Christ have been given by younger souls than any numbered of this Church? Younger than any of this fellowship were scores of either sex who won a martyr's crown and burned to cinders at the stake. Younger than any among us have been hundreds of Jesus's followers whose souls, turning in childhood upward to God, have been like an altar-flame of devotion, which no lapses of time or seductions of the world could make dim. Younger than any man of thirty-two in this congregation was Henry Martyn, dying in distant Asia Minor outworn in service in India and Persia, across and across which, —like one incapable of rest,— he had borne the Gospel of Calvary. Younger than any man of twenty-seven in this assembly was John Calvin when he sketched the outlines of his immortal Institutes, the fruit of years-long study into the deep things of God! Younger than any youth of twenty-three in this house was Harlan Page when he could give as one of the reasons of his willingness to remove from one home to another that he "had personally done his utmost, by direct individual endeavor, for the salvation of every person in the town where he lived." Younger than any woman of twenty in this congregation was that girl, dwelling once on the corner of New Haven's elm-surrounded Green; and afterward the wife of Amer-



ica's greatest theologian, Jonathan Edwards, when she walked with God, as one who "almost saw Him face to face," and who dwelt in His presence as with a familiar friend.

And as we look out on to the earnest ranks of men and women in the world about us who are now,—in Church, in Sunday-school, in mission fields, in prayer-meetings, in the highway, at home, abroad,—carrying on the work of the Lord and wearing the yoke of Jesus, what a proportion of them are of youthful years. From how many thousand such lives, to-day, comes a word of solemn reproof and searching, though unintended condemnation, to any among us who, older in years, seem not yet to have learned that existence is a serious business; and, longer within sound of the Master's call, have not yet put our shoulder to the yoke of service!

Oh! youthful members of this congregation, redeem the time! Live not as those who have no higher purpose than the frivolities of the hour. Youth-time is precious. Early years are of exceeding worth. Devoted to the Master's service they will be bright with happy usefulness and deathless with eternal rewards.

## VII.

## REDEEMING THE TIME.\*

EPHESIANS V: 15. 16.

*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

The striking figure which Paul here employs concerning the treatment of time would be suited, I think, at any period to arrest attention. But it has a particular pertinence to us to-day, standing as we do within a few fast-flying hours of the close of one of those great subdivisions of duration which the order of nature and the common usages of business and of society make it habitual in us to recognize.

The figure Paul uses is taken from a transaction familiar in all the market-places of the ancient world. That was a world of war and slavery. After every considerable territorial conquest by any successful military power great multitudes of the inhabitants of the conquered districts were seized upon as the chattel property of the victors. The State claimed its share. The commanding general had his apportionment. Officers of less degree, each in his successive rank, took, as a part of the spoils of war, a number, less or more according to the total to be divided, of these

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\* Written in 1888, and preached on the last Sunday of the year.

human goods for their personal share. Such as they chose to keep, they kept. Such as they chose to sell; they sold. The great market centers once glutted, the smaller towns over the whole empire were supplied with detachments, either on public or private account, till the capacities of buyers or sellers were temporarily exhausted. In such a provincial town as Tarsus, for example, in Paul's boyhood and youth, the spectacle must have been familiar almost as the coming of morning, of the exposure in the market-place of the city of some group of sad-eyed captives,—men, women, and children,—from Germany, successfully swept by the armies of Germanicus; from Thrace, reduced, a little before Paul came of age, to the condition of a Roman province; or even (several years previous to writing the words of our text) from Britain, invaded, and in parts ravaged, by the troops of Aulus Plautius and of Vespasian.

And there, on any one of those days, might have been seen the transaction which gave Paul the striking metaphor which has attracted our attention to-day. Some one coming into the market-place beholds the groups of bond-slaves there put on exhibition—a stalwart dark-haired man from Thrace, a blue-eyed girl from Northern Germany, or perhaps a child of that Gallic blood whose gray eyes and dark lashes are the beauty of an occasional modern Irish face. Moved by whatever sentiment, pity, cupidity, or what not, the visitor pays down the price and redeems the captive, redeems him sometimes to liberty, redeems him oftener only to another servitude, but anyway redeems him out of the bondage in which he has hitherto been subjected to a master whose helpless and utter chattel he was.

So, says the Apostle to the Christians of Ephesus, who must have been perfectly familiar with transactions like these, so deal with your time. Take it out of the bondage in which it is, out of its place and condition of chattelhood; and redeem it to its proper and appointed uses. The illustration, borrowed from the slave market, which the Apostle employed is, happily, less familiar than it once was; though quite within the memory of the majority of us here present to-day it could have been paralleled in a considerable part of our so-called Christian land. But were Paul writing a letter now, rather than eighteen centuries and a quarter ago, and to this First Church of Hartford instead of to that prosperous Church of Asia Minor, could he possibly describe the condition of time, as it is with us, by a delineation more truthful than that which depicts it as in bondage? Could he point out a duty more imperative or more worthy of consideration in these flying moments of the closing year, than its redemption to a Christian liberty?

For, my hearers, is it not, in point of fact, the great and common experience,—certainly of almost all of us who are gathered here to-day,—that we ourselves find that this unique and priceless possession of time is, in manifold ways, bound, mortgaged, captivated,—to use a word which has somewhat drifted away from its former significance in its older and etymological employment,—captivated to interests and occupations from which we find it almost impossible to rescue it?

Ask the man of business to give you an hour to present the claims of some philanthropic enterprise, or requests him to undertake some regularly recurrent

service which will demand the setting apart to its use of a small segment of one day of every week, and you are, very probably, stopped on the threshold of your plea by the declaration,—honestly enough made too,—that he “hasn’t time” for the hearing you solicit or for the service you propose. Very likely he will give you a contribution for the benevolent enterprise without hearing about it, and will feel a certain pang of regret at peremptorily putting aside your proposal for the hour’s weekly employment; but he puts it aside all the same, for the Philistines of business have him in bondage and he has to grind in their mill, as blind as Samson, almost, to anything beside.

Ask the busy woman of society for some coöperation in a Christian undertaking which cannot but appeal to her both as a woman and a Christian, and she finds the silken bands which the demands of conventional obligations have woven about her almost as inexorable as the iron chains of a physical servitude, in laying an embargo upon her assenting endeavor.

Propose to the appointed officers of a Christian Church,—the illustration must be fresh in the memory of at least ten men in this congregation,—a service strenuously demanded by the fellowship of the churches, or a work in behalf of the Church itself whose officers they are, and observe how the declination passes from lip to lip of as good men as can be found in any Church membership of five hundred anywhere because of the demands upon their time already existing, and tasking them to the full.

Ah, yes, what a common experience this is! How fettered and captivated time is with almost all of us! No wonder a brilliant woman of a name familiar to

you all, engaged in a great, though quixotic, literary enterprise, and whose heroic-pathetic story, known to many of us long, is just now more publicly unveiled to the general eye, sighed for a life in one of those tardier moving planets—Jupiter or Saturn—whose slow-revolving day would give supposedly longer time for work! For, indeed, when one really thinks of it, what a scanty segment of duration it is between the cradle and the grave that a man has to put into bonds to any kind of continuous endeavor! Deduct from the narrow span the irresponsible years of infancy and early childhood; take out of it the great section continually demanded by sleep; subtract the large portion inevitably employed in whatever is necessary to keep the machinery of existence itself going; add yet further to this discount side all that is snatched away by illness or pilfered by accident, and then consider the portion incapacitated by old age, and how small a fraction there is left for direct and intentional employment in any endeavor! I think I have said once in this pulpit before, but no matter, the statement is worth repeating every twelvemonth at least, that a writer profoundly acquainted with the history of literary men, Thomas DeQuincey, estimated that, after making the deductions incident to every life, the sum total of absolutely available time the most industrious literary man of seventy can be supposed to have employed in any voluntary literary enterprise is not more than eleven solid years. Mercantile men commonly enter on what may be called the real occupation of life at a somewhat earlier age than do men of a literary profession. But then, they do not generally practice so fully that expedient for lengthening one's days of

which Charles Lamb wittily said that it was best accomplished by taking them out of one's nights, so that the practical span of actual endeavor is not much longer. To what narrow compass does that shut up one's history. And when that span is bound to the tremendous, exacting labors of competitive business or professional endeavor, or even of conventional society, how hard it is to redeem any portion out of that servitude to any other employment how sacred or imperative whatsoever!

Nevertheless, the pressing necessity of some kind of emancipatory process in behalf of at least a portion of our time, and in view of interests now suffering by its bondage, is a necessity which comes home occasionally, I suppose, to most of us. Very few people look back from a point of advanced or even of middle life over the track by which they have come, feeling anything like complete satisfaction with the proportionate employment of their days. Even if the broad outline of their past is reasonably contenting, and the use which they have made of their time is that to which, in great measure, they have been shut up by the circumstances of their days, still the men and women of mature years must be very few who do not wish that they had ransomed and employed some possible portions at least of that now irrecoverable past to other and higher uses than have actually been served.

And this general and almost instinctive feeling that some such redemptive rescue of time should have marked our vanished days, which is felt by the least considering of men and women, is emphasized for the more thoughtful by remembrances that only increase



in weight the more they are pondered. For the recollection comes home with the added testimony of personal experience, to such a thoughtfully considering mind, that of all possible possessions a man can ever have, it is his possession of time which is most valuable. It is this which is the indispensable condition of all others. It is that mysterious inheritance on which all others depend, and on the continuance of which everything else hinges. The highest purpose is fruitless unless there is time to permit it to bear its intended harvest. The most resolved endeavor and impassioned action are alike frustrated does not time afford them arena for their proper exercise. How full is the memory of any thoughtful man fifty years old, of instances which have occurred under his personal observation, of noble purposes resultless, and high attempts made vain for lack of time. "O my book, my book"—said poor Buckle, dying at thirty-nine years of age—"I shall never finish my book,"—a book the loss of which so competent a judge as Mr. Lecky says is "one of the most serious misfortunes which have ever befallen English literature." And in lesser ways, and over smaller intended undertakings, that is a lament which is forever sounding in the ears of every man not stone deaf to what goes on in him and about him in this world.

This indispensableness of time as the condition of the fulfillment of any enterprise is just as true in religious things as in any others. How strangely this is sometimes forgotten! Men seem to think that spiritual welfares and acquisitions are some way exempt from that general law which they recognize as prevailing elsewhere, the law that the possession of any-



thing worth having is the fruit of endeavor (some one's endeavor) through prolonged periods of time. The attainment of knowledge is the result of the industrious employment of time. The accumulation of wealth depends on time. But religion can be got in a moment. Piety comes in a kind of instantaneous cataclysm of the soul. The life of godliness in the spirit can be adequately nourished on the scraps and accidental waste bits of duration which fall from a life-history devoted primarily to other employments, as the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table. Oh! what a low and disastrously erroneous notion of the spiritual life this is. To what a pitiable piece of quackery and magic does it reduce the divinest experience and the highest acquirement possible to man! Religion, like everything else worth having, demands time. The attainments of piety no more than the attainments of knowledge can dispense with time. Out of the inexorable conditions of the spiritual life, as much as out of those of the physical and intellectual, sounds the urgent declaration that of all possible possessions, none a man can have can be so indispensable as time. Nowhere more than in reference to the needs of the soul is the redemption of time to distinct, purposeful employment, for definite spiritual ends, a condition of the attainment of any satisfying result.

Yet this worth of time which is so brought to mind by a perception of its indispensability to the securing of the objects which a religious life, as much as any other life, has in view, has always been vividly brought home to my own mind by a consideration of a character somewhat different from that we have just

noted. This is a consideration of what the actual period of duration which we ourselves have had, and have used,—perhaps with a quality and intensity of employment that does not altogether fill us with self-gratulation to-day,—has done for some other men and women in their spiritual histories. All along parallel with our own, other lives have run. Through the same identical moments which we have passed, they passed also. And what lives some of them have been. Marked by what achievements. Heroic with what self-sacrifices. Beneficent with what Christlike deeds ! At the very time when we were idling away our days in slothfulness, or grinding in the mill of a merely material or private welfare, some men here and there were solicitously redeeming those identical moments,—for we had the same and an equal number of them,—to a spiritual and eternal good. Some of them are in heaven to-day, and surrounded there by souls won thither by their endeavors, because of their employment of the precise hours which we spent in pursuits for which we have perhaps nothing now to show, and certainly nothing to put in comparison with the results of their endeavors. Right alongside of us, embarrassed by all the difficulties which we encounter, against all obstacles which stood in their path as much as in ours, they redeemed the time,—the time that was once our own,—to ends which will make rejoicings in heaven forever. Ah me ! is there anything which can give us a more vivid sense of the possible worth which may lie in the flying years of one short life, or a more humiliating sense of our employment of those self-same years, than some simple biography of men or women who lived through periods which were in

greater or less extent identically and consciously our own? What they were and did! what we did and were! Time must be a priceless thing, since its redemption, by these souls, can bring about such glorious ends!

But now having perhaps vivified a little in our minds the sense of that bondage wherein our time is held captive, and having somewhat, I hope, quickened our apprehension of the exceeding worth of that which we are exhorted by the Apostle to redeem to nobler uses, the question comes to us as a most practical one: Can we do it? How can it be done? By what means, notwithstanding all the difficulties in the way, can we do something to redeem the time?

I suggest as one most helpful means toward redeeming time,—the most helpful of any means,—that of making religion absolutely (what we all account it theoretically), absolutely, I say, the uppermost interest of life. There is a tremendous power in an uppermost interest. Whatever it be, it swings everything round to itself. If a man's uppermost interest is his business, all insensibly and even oftentimes against his voluntary resolves and endeavors, his business subordinates everything in him and about him to itself. His business goes with him to his bed, gets up with him to every new sunrise, occupies the dreams of his sleeping hours, sits with him at the table and hurries him at his dinner, follows him to Church on Sunday, holds him in a perpetual grip as its bond-slave and thrall. Is a man's uppermost interest the prosecution of some scientific inquiry, or some literary enterprise? How quickly such an inquiry or such an endeavor puts everything else underfoot. All things

seem tributary to that. He walks the streets and encounters the most unlooked for confirmations of his theory, or suggestions toward his enterprise. Paragraphs of the daily newspapers, which others read unthinking, are full of significance to him. All winds blow for his scheme, all roads lead toward it. Is a woman's uppermost interest the successes and attainments of society? What keen preternatural instincts are developed as to what will or will not promote that main end. How sensitive, as if every nerve were on the outside, she is to what seems a slight or an overlooking on some one's part. What a mighty thing an invitation or the lack of an invitation is. How trifles become mountains; and all things simple, natural and deserving, are changed to something else when seen through fashion's artificial eye.

A supreme interest,—good or bad,—commands the field. It takes possession of the faculties and brings everything under its control. It especially rules time; and by its constant vigilant watchfulness and unconscious alertness in being always intent on its supreme concern, may almost be said to make time—so little does it suffer to waste from the interests about which it is really and supremely concerned.

Now, my friends, it is not otherwise with religion. If religion is a man's chief interest,—as every professedly Christian man professes it to be,—it is master of the situation. It swings everything round to itself. It makes business, pleasure, knowledge, all tributary and subordinate to a higher concern than themselves. It uses every one of them as servants and tools to promote its main concern. It does not discourage diligence in business, or attainment in knowledge or

enjoyment in society. But with the natural supremacy of an acknowledged master, it subjects them all to that chief end,—the knowledge and service of God,—in which religion consists. It is easy to see what a redeemer of time such a supreme interest in religion must inevitably be. In a profound and comprehensive sense, it redeems all a man's time,—his hours of most diligent business or of his most leisurely enjoyments,—to itself. But besides this, it does in a particular way, and just as any other supreme interest does, redeem time in its subdivisions and particles. It looks out for the fragments of duration. It gives theme and occupation to accidental half-hours and minutes. Minutes and half-hours, because they have been under the supreme interest of scholarship, have sometimes made scholars. Elihu Burritt, out in New Britain, standing at his blacksmith forge, and snatching now and then a glance at his Greek grammar, or his Legendre's Geometry, is a sufficiently conspicuous and near at hand illustration of the truth of that fact. And just so,—because under the power of a supreme interest,—minutes and half-hours have made saints of God. The commanding concern has lent to and found in the small crumbs of duration a value incalculable, and an opportunity for spiritual growth continuous and blessed. I entreat you to make actual that supreme interest in religion which most of you, my hearers, even now profess, as one exceedingly practical method in the redemption of time.

I conclude by the mention of only one more suggestion of a possible way of redeeming time to higher ends. This is by habituating ourselves,—as I suppose we

shall all agree it would be wise in us to habituate ourselves,— to look upon time as provisional and preparatory in its character. Time has its main end and its highest use in what comes after it. We are here seventy years; we are there seventy thousand. We are here a little while; we are there forever. The bare putting of these facts beside one another is itself a commentary, which hardly needs anything added to it, on the significance of that provisional and preparatory character which must belong to time and whatever time can do. Crowd time full as it may be with interesting and significant events; employ it grandly as it can be employed in great and important matters; still the main interest and value of it, from the very nature of the case, must be in what it leads on to and prepares for. But once let a distinct and abiding perception of this fact really enter into a man's soul and what a curious alteration it inevitably makes in the whole perspective of affairs. What a shifting and exchange of places and values immediately takes place in the things he looks upon. Those things are worth most— are they not?—which most directly affect the quality of one's own and others' future. That is the most important matter, surely, which has the most immediate and moulding influence on what is to be bye-and-bye and forever. But if this is so, how unimportant are some things generally regarded as very important here; how transcendently momentous are some things, which are here deemed of little concern! Let a man but come to measure all the occupations and interests of life,— I do not say with exclusive reference, or with emotional and excited reference, but,— with calm and reasonable reference, such as becomes

the facts in the case, to their bearing on the character of that future to which he is moving on, and for which everything here is fitting or unfitting him now. It will be impossible for him not to sustain a profoundly altered attitude toward the things of life and action about him. A new standard of values will be his by which all things will be measured. How they bear on, or fail to bear, on the welfare which is abiding is a question which, like the touch of *aqua fortis* on a metal, will show the gold or the brass of moral things, and rate them at their proper worth.

And time itself, which has in it this preparatory and provisional character, must be, to the last grain of it, a sacred thing. How can any one to whom its worth is apparent permit it to be wasted in careless frivolities, or misused in employments, which, however they may be dignified by high-sounding names, contribute not to the main end for which time was given, or to those abiding welfares of ourselves or others, which will be theirs and ours when "time shall be no more." Listen again to the words of the Apostle, forever seasonable and forever kind :

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil."



## VIII.

## IMPERFECT CHARACTERS OF SCRIPTURE.\*

HEBREWS XI: 13.

*These all died in faith.*

This eleventh chapter of the Hebrews is a kind of muster-roll of ancient piety. Names which in the regular narrative of Scripture stand separated from one another by wide tracts of time and by many intervening generations, are here gathered in one company. Perhaps the figure will be allowable, if it is said that in this passage of his Epistle the writer undertakes to conduct us through a portrait-gallery of the famous believing dead. It is an august and venerable succession that he bids us look upon. The long line reaches back to a remote and almost shadowy antiquity; yet the moral lineaments of each of those who have been deemed worthy of a place in this gallery of Faith stand out in lifelike distinctness. Here seem to gaze down upon us the sacred and the great, with whose names is identified the very thought of religion (not alone in our personal understanding of it with which they have been associated from our childhood), but in the actual development of religious history in the world. Here is Abel, first martyr to the cause of pure worship, and

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\* Written in 1864.



Enoch, the man who has never died. Here are Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac the son of their old age. Here, clothed in his Egyptian robes of authority, is Joseph, the kidnapped child of Palestine; and Moses, cradled amid the flags of the Nile, to lead the children of Joseph and his brethren back to Palestine once more. Here is the venerable form of Samuel, last of the Judges; and the regal effigy of David,—not the first king of Israel indeed, but the first kingly ancestor of the prince Emmanuel. As we pass along the sacred company we feel the gathering influence of their noble histories; we sympathize in the exclamation of the writer of the Epistle, “Of whom the world was not worthy”; and are impressed by the remembrance that we are encompassed by “so great” and so majestic “a cloud of witnesses.”

But now,—while still pondering on the constancy of Noah, or the self-denial of Moses,—our attention is arrested by two or three figures in this Scripture gallery, respecting whom a half-felt wonder perhaps rises. Why are these men here? This is a gallery of the saints. Those who are represented in it are set forth as having “obtained a good report.” It is testified of them that they “all died in faith”; that “God is not ashamed to be called their God”; that they “wrought righteousness, obtained promises,” and that God “hath prepared for them a city.” We read some of these commendations perhaps with a little surprise. Here, for example, looks down upon us the warrior Gileadite Jephthah, the illegitimate child of a lawless race, born and nurtured in the wild regions of chase and freebooting beyond the Jordan. And while we wonder at his place in this company, we seem to see

his hands reddening with the blood of his only child, slain in fulfilment of his rash and ruthless vow. Samson, too,—devoted indeed from birth to the restraints of a Nazarite's pledge of temperance, but in nearly all other respects the most jovial, irregular, unlicensed of men,—we start a little at seeing Samson depicted among the worthies of Scripture. When we try to think of him thus, it is not perhaps strange that his mad expeditions down to Timnath, and the shaving of his hair in the chamber in the valley of Sorek, disturb a moment the reverence of our meditation. So, too, in their degree, of Barak and Gideon; and in lesser measure even of Jacob, whose crafty supplanting of his brother and base deception of his blind old father, can scarcely fail to occur to us every time we think of this "inheritor of the promises." These are not men whom we should naturally select as devout characters—examples of piety and God-serving. Had we been enumerating the saints of old, and composing a volume for the religious edification of men, it is doubtful whether Rahab and Samson and Jephthah would have found any place in it. Or, if we discovered here and there a trait in the lives even of these which prevented an entire denial of mention in our catalogue of the good, we should at all events carefully suppress many of the facts which now confront us,—sometimes perhaps we think a little uncomfortably,—in the Scripture story.

Yet these persons are without hesitation ranked among the saints and heroes. The Bible fearlessly challenges for them a place in perpetual remembrance. Their characters are drawn out in full detail. Their imperfections, as well as their virtues, are impartially

set before us. The pen of Scripture photographs for us the passionate violence of Ehud and Shamgar, as well as the devotion of Daniel or the zeal of Jeremiah. And then, after having done so, setting before us thus a character in which good and evil are mixed in strong and contrasting colors, the Word of God says respecting some of them, as in the text, "these all died in faith"; these were "persuaded" of the promises; these "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"; these all "obtained a good report."

The characteristic of Scripture which comes out so distinctly in this famous eulogy pronounced on the worthies of Old Testament history in this chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is a characteristic which pervades to some extent the entire Bible. All through the volume given by inspiration we are in the same way presented with lives of men,—accepted and honored servants of God,—who are marked by painful blemishes and imperfections. Characters are held up before us in the most sacred of all associations, and the most trusted of all stations, upon which we behold, without the least attempt to hide the fact from us, the scars of grievous infirmities and sometimes of sins. Where should we look for blameless behavior if not among the immediate disciples of our Lord? To whom should we turn for flawless correctness of conduct, if not to those who were entrusted by Christ with the duty of sharing His ministry while He was yet on earth, and of recording the Scriptures and guiding His church when He was gone? Yet even the best beloved disciple sustains a severe rebuke at the Master's lips, for his sinful desire to invoke "fire from heaven" to burn up a whole village which had slighted Jesus and His

company. Peter lies and blasphemes and treacherously denies his Master, though he afterward deeply repents of his wickedness. But repentant Peter is not a perfect man. Paul "withstands him to the face" on one occasion long subsequently, "because," as he says, "he was to be blamed," and was carried away with an unworthy "dissimulation." But even Paul is not without his weak point. On a certain missionary journey with Barnabas, carrying the Gospel of Peace, these two eminent men fall into a controversy, and the "contention is so sharp between them" that they cannot continue to work together, but separate, each taking a different companion and a different field of labor.

Now, it cannot be for nothing that such facts as these are preserved to us in the biographies of the good men of Scripture. It would have been very easy to have suppressed them. There was no necessity that the writer of the Epistle from which the text is taken, should have added to his catalogue of Abel and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and Moses, the names of Samson and Jephthah and Rahab. The catalogue would have been grand and illustrious without these. And yet Holy Scripture has carefully enumerated these among the worthies of Old Testament history, and declares respecting them that God "is not ashamed to be called their God." And with equal fearlessness do the Gospels and the Epistles,—while claiming for the Apostolic company an assured place among the redeemed and the beloved of God,—set forth with impartial distinctness the frailties of a John, a Barnabas, a Peter, and a Paul. Nay, in the same spirit, are the contentions and backslidings of the primitive Churches

brought before us. Large portions of Apostolic letters are devoted to redressing errors and flagrant abuses which, in less than twenty years after their founding, have crept into the Churches of Thessalonica, Corinth, and Galatia.

Now all this must have its instructions for us. A procedure so contrary to man's way of commending a cause to favorable judgment cannot have been deliberately chosen by the Spirit of God, without a deep and sufficient reason. This setting before us of mingled evil and good in the lives of those whom Scripture holds up as saints and heroes, this numbering of Rahab and Samson among those "of whom the world was not worthy," has certainly its uses or it would not have been done. Let us endeavor, therefore, to gain some of these lessons from the Imperfect Characters of Scripture: or in other words, let us seek to know why the faults of such men as David and Jacob find a careful record; and Gideon and Barak are numbered among those who "wrought righteousness" and "obtained promises."

One reflection, of a somewhat general and preliminary nature, which occurs to us, is this: The record of these Imperfect Characters of Scripture imparts a life-like quality to Biblical history. The narratives of the Book of God come to us wearing an aspect of naturalness and authenticity derived from the presentation before us of characters beset and often overcome by the familiar passions and infirmities of our nature. As we look around us among men we nowhere behold faultless perfection. All whom we know are imperfect. The best are but partly good. The most exempt from infirmities are nevertheless only comparatively exempt,

It is a good thing therefore, on the mere ground of securing our confidence in its truthfulness, and in making Scripture biography real and living to us, that the Bible presents the characters of the men of whom it tells us with all their imperfections and failures. Not like some volumes purporting to be truthful records of the lives of eminent Christian saints is the Bible in this particular. Not like a great deal of biographical literature issued by our religious press, read in our Sunday-schools, wept over by our firesides, is the Book of God. These books of human begetting are rich in tales of the unnaturally and impossibly good; men and women with fewer acknowledged faults than the impatient, though beloved John; children riper for immortality than that arduous Apostle who was obliged still to keep under his body and bring it into subjection lest after all he should be "a castaway." It is not in this manner that the narratives of Scripture are set before us. These present us men placed in the midst of life's common struggles. Men battered and scarred with rough contact with affairs. Men of like passions with ourselves. Men who find it hard work to do right, and who often fail. Men who battle terribly to keep their heads above water, and who, some of them, seem at times well-nigh swept away and lost. Apostles fiery tempered; Prophets melancholy, impatient, headstrong and humble by turns; Kings and Judges at once lawless and obedient, reckless and devout,—these are the men who pass before us on the Scripture page. And hence Scripture comes to us as a real record. These are real lives we look upon. The stamp of authenticity is on them. These are men of a kind that we can understand. Biographies like these can help

us, for our own lives tell us that they are true and their struggles interpret to us our own.

Another lesson which comes to us from the Scripture commendations of Imperfect Characters, is that responsibility is proportioned to privilege. Men are estimated according to the light they enjoy. Several of the names mentioned with praise in this eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, belong to the darkest and most turbulent period of Jewish history,—that recorded in the Book of Judges. This was undoubtedly the lowest moral era of Hebrew story. As the book itself says, repeating it several times to impress the fact upon us, “In those days there was no king in Israel, [but] every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” There was no fixed capital of the nation, no regular sanctuary, no established government. No one tribe had an acknowledged pre-eminence. The rulers which were from time to time raised up to exercise authority, came according to no recognized law, and belonged to no hereditary family. Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh; Barak of Naphtali; Samson of Dan; Jephthah came from the mixed race in the border country beyond Jordan, his mother a concubine of the native tribes of Canaan. In this turbulent, ungoverned time these men lived. No public sanctuary gathered them. No recognized law controlled them. The Jewish people were mingled with the original inhabitants of the land, their victory over them not yet established. It was a period unparalleled in the annals of the Hebrew race for its confusion, its dimness of moral perception, its absence of civilization and control. Yet in the midst of this disorder these men lived lives which secured for



them the approbation of the Biblical historian. That they were perfect men is not alleged. That they were very imperfect men is plainly shown to us. No veil is cast over their infirmities. Nevertheless Scripture finds in them something which makes them venerable and sacred. What that "something" was, we shall have occasion speedily to notice. But at present we are remarking on the fact that they were dealt with and estimated, not according to the light they did not have, but according to what they had. Scripture is nowhere betrayed into any expression of apology for their faults. It never defends or sympathizes with their imperfections. It simply narrates them with an impartial hand, and then claims that spite of them all, these men, in view of the dim light that they enjoyed, were good men. In other words, it applies to the estimation of character that plain principle announced by Christ: "To whom much is given, of him will much be required;" and the converse of it is equally true: To whom little is given, of him will little be required. As a consequence of this principle we see, therefore, as we come down through Biblical story, that though the good men of Scripture are all of them imperfect men, yet their imperfections are continually narrower in range and lighter in degree. As the light which shines around them becomes brighter, they are required to attain, and do attain, a higher moral standing ground, and to become more and more faultless. The Bible acknowledges the Apostle John to have been an imperfect man; but the impartial pen records no worse fault against him than a high and imperious temper. And the exhibition even of this fault is, so far as the narrative leaves us to infer, confined to his youthful days



and the beginning period of his religious life. The plain conclusion, therefore, results from the Scripture's method of dealing with the imperfect characters of which it tells us that accountability is proportioned to light. Men are estimated by their opportunities. Religious obligation advances as religious knowledge increases. We are bound to be better men than the primitive Christians by the same law which bound them to be more blameless than the Hebrews of the eras of Deborah and Eli. What was but a fault in them, may be a sin in us. The thing which was but a blemish in them may be to us the ruin of the soul.

A further instruction afforded by the Imperfect Characters of Scripture is the value of Faith as a principle of life.

I said there was something in these men of whom Scripture tells us, in spite of all their faults, which affords a true and sufficient ground for the glorious commendation given them in the book of God. That something was Faith. They believed in God. They confided in Him to do what He promised. They ventured everything on His pledges. He was a real Being to them. And His word was a rock on which they rested. They were accustomed in their hour of need to look to Him, and believe that they were heard. Take but one example, for time will not suffice to mention more than one illustrious instance of these exhibitions of belief in God of which the Bible is full. This instance shall be taken from the troubled and morally-darkened epoch already spoken of. The Israelites had been but just delivered from long and exhausting conflicts with the Philistines on the south, and Jabin and Sisera, who had invaded

from the north, when a new and greater peril threatened them. The Midianites and Amalekites came up against them. Like their Arab posterity of modern days they came dressed in scarlet, riding on dromedaries and camels. They drove before them their cattle; they covered the hills with their tents, an army of conquest and occupation. In this juncture the message of God came to Gideon, a man of a poor household of Manasseh. And as we read in the record, the Lord said unto him, "Surely I will be with thee and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Summoned thus, Gideon assumed the undertaking. He sent messengers and gathered the people. There were assembled to him thirty-two thousand men. These were but as a handful to the host of the invaders, but even these were too many for the divine purpose. But would Gideon still confide in God if his forces were lessened? God tried him. He commanded him to proclaim in the hearing of the trembling Israelites, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him depart." Was it not enough to discomfit the leader, that he beheld twenty-two thousand men turn from him and go? But still he was not enough tried. Ten thousand were too many. By a still farther process of sifting and separation Gideon beheld his number reduced to three hundred men. Would he still undertake the work? The disparity of numbers was terrible, but still three hundred powerful warriors armed with practiced weapons could do something. Nay, but they were not allowed to be armed. The amazed, but still confiding, leader obeyed the command which took away even from the little company left to him their spears and swords, and saw them accoutred for their

perilous enterprise each with a trumpet in one hand, and a pitcher containing a burning lamp in the other. Did he falter at the strange injunction which bade him undertake such a housewife-like mode of warfare? There is no sign of it. He believed the word which had been spoken: "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." And when the three hundred had blown their trumpets, and clashed the breaking pitchers, and flashed forth the fitful rays of the lamps upon the midnight darkness, and when the Midianites, astonished and frightened, had fallen upon one another, and fled hewing each other down in their terror all along the road to Zererath and the Jordan, a thing had been done, by the power of steadfast faith in God, which entitled Gideon to a place among the heroes of religious history forever. We vindicate the writer to the Hebrews as he holds this man up, all rude and imperfect as other parts of his history show him to have been, as an example of trust in God and a light of faith always.

So too of Samson, when blind and captive and made to do ungainly sport for his oppressors, he felt after the pillars of the temple, and in the earnestness of his patriotism and devotion to his nation he prayed his last prayer: "O Lord God remember me, I pray Thee: and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once." We forget his wild revels at Timnath, we forget his shameful loss of his locks. This was a man who believed in God, and knew how to utter the prayer of faith.

The strong instruction comes to us thus even from the most imperfect of the men whom the Scripture enumerates among the saints, that Faith is the all-im-

portant principle of life. Belief in God; belief that God will do as He says; will save and punish as He affirms He will; will bless those who confide in Him,— a steadfast conviction of these things is the justifying fact of a life whether it be lived in Palestine or New England; in the time of the Judges, or Apostles, or now. Indeed, in some respects this lesson is taught us by such lives as those of Samson and Gideon more plainly than by those of Abraham or Paul. For the fact stands more boldly out in their cases that true faith will save very imperfect men. The thing which justifies the soul is its simplicity of trust in God, whatever be the object toward which that trust is summoned. It ought to be no harder for a man to believe God is willing to forgive him if he repents, or will punish him if he does not, than it was for the husbandman of Manasseh to believe that his lamps and pitchers would gain him victory. And just so long as a man cannot believe this, Gideon and Samson and Rahab are his instructors. And they are instructors all the more convincing, because their own cases are so vivid illustrations that faith can deliver very great and miserable sinners. It is not the perfectness of the character which gives the efficacy to the faith. It is faith which blots out the imperfection, and saves Rahab and may save me.

A still further lesson which comes to us from the depicting before us of the imperfect good men of Scripture is this: We are admonished against over much fault-finding and severity in our judgments of one another. The critical temper which is always rasping at other people's shortcomings, which is always uttering hard speeches if men do not fully meet some

ideal standard of right conduct which we are pleased to set up, does indeed, in many places in Scripture, receive severe condemnation. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," says the Master. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." That is a law, the execution of which might well make many tremble whose tongues are trained to be sharp swords, perpetually hacking and thrusting, and hewing at other people's faults. "None is good but one," said Christ. All beside Him have their infirmities and their sins. And if a man expects everybody to be perfect he had better move out of this world. But this lesson of forbearance in our judgments, taught us in so many ways beside, is in a very signal manner taught by the narratives of the good men of the Bible. It is a very instructive remembrance that there is not one of these good men, whose character is drawn out at any considerable length, who is not plainly revealed as having his faults and weaknesses. If absolute perfection is demanded as a safeguard against severe judgment then neither Paul nor John can go free. Then every idle tongue in Corinth is at liberty to twit Paul of his quarrel with Barnabas; and every garrulous member of a congregation in which the saintly and beloved disciple utters his oft repeated injunction: "Love one another, Love one another," may remind his neighbor of the time when the same lips passionately invoked fire from heaven to consume a Samaritan village. The Bible recognizes all their faults, but says nevertheless of vastly more imperfect men than these: "God is not ashamed to be called their God." If the heart is once made humble and contrite; if the man is once radically and truly set in terms of acceptance with God and of

confession of wrong to his offended fellow men, Scripture becomes a generous and kindly judge. Peter's backsliding shall not be mentioned perpetually to his confusion, nor even David's flagrant sin, openly confessed and agonized over, deny him a place among the honored and the loved. Well would it be for us to ponder this lesson who draw one another before the poor tribunals of our own imperfect judgments, and perhaps still more imperfect lives, and demand of all a conformity to what, after all, may be no behest of morality, or justice or duty; but possibly only a whim, a fancy, an individual taste.

A final instruction which we may profitably reap from the record of the Imperfect Characters of Scripture, is a word of encouragement and comfort to imperfect but struggling men.

I said, a little time ago, that responsibility is proportioned to privilege; that religious obligations advance with increase of knowledge; that we are in duty bound to be better Christians than those of the primitive age. It is so. I would have that lesson solemnly rest upon us as an abiding truth. But, nevertheless, it was not, I think, without its designs toward a rightful encouragement of men, downcast and troubled because of their shortcomings, that so many of the saints of old are set before us in the posture of delinquents, and in the manifest need of forgiveness. There is a token of the tenderness of Christ toward the weak and faltering of His flock in the fact that He caused it to be recorded that, even amid the immediate circle of His own disciples, there was a doubting Thomas, a backsliding Peter, an angry John. The frailties of the good men of Scripture are no shelter for the man who makes them

an excuse for remissness in the urgency of his own endeavor. But the man who is with all his heart striving to do the Master's will, and yet who comes consciously very far short of doing what he would be glad to do,—who does watch and agonize and labor, but is yet sometimes overtaken in a fault, may draw an inference of encouragement from the words that the Book of God speaks of men, perhaps, some of them, more imperfect than he. It should comfort us that Christ did not cut off from His companionship a Peter who thrice denied Him, and a Thomas who said "Except I thrust my hand into His side I will not believe." The infirmities of even the Apostolic company were recorded for our cheer. They bid us look up with hope to Him who like as a father pitieth his children, pities them who fear Him. They call upon us to remember that no sense of unworthiness however deep, should bring despair into a soul that clings steadfastly to Christ. An utter surrender of the soul to Him, as the only hope, will hide a multitude of sins. The man who rests on Him alone, and amid perplexities and failures, still follows after Him, will not be rejected. "Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down." The God who accepted a repentant David, and the Christ who said to a doubting disciple, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands," will pardon the infirmities of God's children now, as those of old were pardoned. Press on in labor and in faith, and of us as of Samson, and Rahab, and Jephthah it shall at last be said: God is not ashamed to be called our God.



## IX.

## HEROD AND MANAEN.\*

## ACTS XIII: I.

*Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.*

This thirteenth chapter of the book of Acts marks the great dividing point between the leaderships of Peter and of Paul in the developing Church. Up to this time Peter had been the foremost figure in the Church's story. He led in the election of Matthias to the Apostolate made vacant by Judas's apostacy and suicide. He was the preacher of the sermon on the occasion when three thousand people were "pricked in their hearts" on the day of Pentecost. He pronounced judgment on Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Ghost. He opened the door to the admission of the Gentiles to the Church by the baptism of Cornelius and his household.

Yet now through that thus opened door walked another figure who during the rest of the Apostolic narrative occupies the eye as the leading personage of the new stage of events on which the Church was about to enter. This figure is that of Paul, or as he

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\* Written in 1890.



was still called, Saul. This new stage of activity is the first great missionary movement of the Church outside the borders of Palestine and outside the fellowship of Judaism. Converts here and there, like the Greek proselytes who sought to see Christ Himself on the last great day of the Passover before He died, like the Ethiopian eunuch converted by Philip on the road down to Gaza, like the household of Cornelius before spoken of, there had, indeed, been previous to this time. But now, for the first time, the experiment was to be made of a direct missionizing endeavor to reach the outside pagan world. There is a distinct pause in the narrative as if of consciousness of the great event. There is an enumeration of forces like that of a commander in view of a critical campaign. The scene is Antioch, a city itself a little over the border of Palestine toward Asia Minor, whither a number of the disciples of the new faith had fled for safety from the persecution which arose about the killing of Stephen. It was from this point of refuge and of Christian activity that the new grand enterprise was to be undertaken. It is impossible not to recognize a kind of unspectacular but profound sense of the magnitude of the issues involved in the transactions of that memorable hour, in the simple, stately way in which the inspired narrative pauses, as it were, to count up the resources at the disposal of the Antioch Church, and describes the solemn setting apart of two of its teachers to the great enterprise before them. There is no beating of drums or roll of Gospel-wagons to be heard, but there is a simple, humble, consecrated action which has left its impress, not on the Gospel narrative alone, but on the history of the universal

Church forever. Let us read the eternally memorable words which record this new departure in Christian history :—

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers. Barnabas and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul.

The first-named and the last-named it will be noticed of all the Antioch prophets or teachers.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Into the general results of this simply but solemnly instituted missionary campaign, it is impossible at the present time to enter. As I have intimated, all the remaining fifteen chapters of the book of the Acts are in effect but a story of the results of the action then taken and of the call of Saul to a leadership in the enterprise.

The purpose for which I have brought this critical moment of Gospel-history forward at this time, is to call attention to the participation in it of one man whose name is nowhere else mentioned in the Gospel-story, but whose briefly-suggested experience and whose coöperation in a transaction like this, is suited, as it seems to me, to lead to some interesting and practical suggestions. What a book the Bible is in thus dropping by the way, almost unnoticed in our intentness on the main drift of its teachings, suggestions of the richest significance in these scarcely-regarded clauses and expressions !

We read that there was among these original "Commissioners for Foreign Missions" in the Antioch Church, a prophet or teacher called "Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch."

"Herod the tetrarch" — what ugly remembrances that name brings up to mind! Herod; the tetrarch was the son of Herod the murderer of the children in all the vicinity of Bethlehem; massacred in the hope of frustrating the prophecy which spoke of the birth of Jesus in David's town. He was that old Herod's son by one of his, then living, nine wives, Malthace, a Samaritan woman. He was the man who having been appointed by his father's will tetrarch of "Peræa and Galilee," and being married to a daughter of Aretas King of Arabia, had taken a fancy to marry also his sister-in-law, his own half-brother's wife, Herodias. She had accepted his proposals, deserted her own husband, brought a war on between Herod and his father-in-law Aretas, and as one indecent and memorable incident of this disgraceful episode on her part and her husband's, had caused her daughter, in a drunken revel, to dance before Herod and his boon associates; and, as there ward for this unwomanly behavior, had secured the murder of John the Baptist, who had objected to the unlawful marriage into which Herodias had entered. Herod the tetrarch was the man, too, who coming down to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, in the year thirty of our era, had been sent to by Pilate to help him out of a dilemma in which Pilate found himself. A prisoner, accused of rebellion against the Roman authority, had been brought before Pilate for judgment. Pilate could find no fault in Him; but as the governor had heard Him called

“Jesus of Nazareth” it occurred to him that he could get out of his difficulty by sending the prisoner to Herod, for Nazareth was a town in Herod’s tetrarchy. So to Herod he sent Him. We know how the experiment resulted. Jesus refused even to answer one of Herod’s questions. Whereupon Herod, having first scourged Him, caused Him to be clothed in mock raiments of royalty, with fastastic crown and sceptre, and opprobrious ridicule and abuse, and sent Him back to Pilate in derision and contempt. A few years after this transaction, stirred up by the importunity of Herodias, who wanted him to have the title of “King” rather than that of “Tetrarch,” Herod went to Rome to endeavor to get that title conferred on him by the Emperor Caligula, with whom he had had a boyhood acquaintance. Here, however, he was met by accusations of treasonable correspondence with the Parthians, and instead of gaining the new title was deprived of his old one and banished into Gaul, whence he subsequently went into Spain, dying there in exile; his wife Herodias—this may be said for her—sticking by him and sharing his downfall to the last.

This was the man to whom Manaen, a prophet or teacher of the Antioch Church, stood in the relation of foster-brother.

The word *σύντροφος*, which our new translators have rendered “foster-brother,” and which the translators of King James’s version rendered “brought up with,” is, perhaps, capable of either significance. It may mean, as the old version suggests, that Manaen had been, according to a custom not unknown in the Roman and oriental world, selected in childhood to be the playmate and companion of young Herod; being

brought up with him for the purpose of having at hand always an associate of his own age. Or it may mean in the stricter sense of the word that the infant Herod and the infant Manaen both nursed at the same breast, — the probability being in this case that Manaen's mother acted as nurse to old Herod's infant child.

The two views are not inconsistent with one another, and there are some historic facts which give plausibility to the idea that they may both be true. Josephus preserves an interesting story concerning an old Manaen, a member of the sect of Essenes, and the old Herod, — father of the Herod of whom we are now speaking, — that may account for one or both of the relationships which have been suggested between the younger Manaen and the younger Herod. When the old Herod, afterward known as Herod the Great, was only about fifteen years of age, a member of the Essene fraternity of religious recluses, some of whom had families and some not, named Manaen, a man reputed to be of unusual piety and prophetic insight, had met the boy Herod, and predicted for him a great future and the attainment of royal dignity. Herod never forgot the augury, and always manifested, — brutal and wicked man though he was, — a special favor toward the sect of which the elder Manaen was a member.

Perfectly natural would it have been, therefore, when the exigencies of his household required the offices of a foster-mother for his young child, that the elder Herod should have accepted the aid in this capacity of the elder Manaen's wife; and that so the young tetrarch and the young prophet of the Church

of Antioch should have been nursed in their infancy by the wife of the man who a few years before had foretold the elder Herod's greatness. Equally natural would it be that a relationship so established should be continued, so that the foster-brother connection of babyhood should be succeeded by the childhood companionship of subsequent years, vindicating thus the interpretation put by classic custom and by the translators of our older version, upon the word *σύντροφος*, — a child "brought up with" another. Either way, or both ways, — and both ways seem on the whole the most probable explanation of the matter, — we see Manaen, one of the Christian teachers of the Antioch Church and one of the founders of Christian missions, standing in a relation which the Word of God has seen fit everlastingly to put on record, to Herod Antipas, the beheader of John the Baptist, the scourger and mocker of the Lord Jesus, and the disgraced experiencer of a Gallic prisoner's obscurity and a Spanish exile's death.

Well, now, the facts hardly seem to need much elaborateness of comment. The lessons of them, — and we cannot but believe the divinely intended lessons, — stand out with great distinctness on the very surface of the story. And they involve not merely biographical suggestions of wide application to other lives than those two here spoken of, but moral suggestions of deep and abiding importance. It is only with a hasty and undeveloping brevity that we can glance at two or three of the inevitably arising reflections of this recorded association of Herod and Manaen.

I mention, then, first the lowest and least important of these suggestions.

How far apart two lives can go which seem once to have been almost the same.

It is with these mental and moral beings of ours much as it is with the drops of water which fall on the high ridge-land of some great continental dividing mountain range. A little deflection this way or that way makes all the difference between their rolling down the swift descent to the Pacific Ocean, or their tracking all the thousand miles of Missouri's and Mississippi's turbid waters to lose themselves in Mexico's gulf and Atlantic's stormier waves. A drift of cloud eastward or westward, a little accidental barrier of snow, a tree fallen across a rivulet's path, make all the difference between destinies so wide-sundered! How full human history is of these near proximities ending in such wide asunderments! From Cain and Abel born into the same primeval household down to the younger Edwards and Aaron Burr, cousins and schoolmates, or, speaking of less sinister contrasts, down to Daniel Webster, the expounder of the Constitution, and Thomas Merrill, pastor of the Church in Middlebury, Vermont, who took the valedictory away from his classmate Webster, these contrasts and sunderments meet us on every side.

The poets have a hundred times found in this contact and separation of human lives some of the most beautiful of their similes, sometimes among the most pathetic of their strains.

Alexander Smith's figure of two lives meeting like two ships upon the sea :—

One little hour, and then away they speed  
On lonely paths, through mist and clouds and foam  
To meet no more.



is familiar to us all. Arthur Hugh Clough has put the same idea into more elaborate lines :

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay  
 With canvas drooping, side by side,  
 Two towers of sail at dawn of day  
 Are scarce long leagues apart descried;

E'en so.—but why the tale reveal  
 Of those whom, year by year unchanged,  
 Brief absence joined anew to feel  
 Astounded, soul from soul estranged.

And the still more familiar lines of Tennyson in which he figures forth the divided lives of his departed friend, Arthur Hallam, and himself, under the comparison of the divided lives of two old playmates and schoolmates of some country village, occur naturally to our thoughts:—

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
 As some divinely gifted man,  
 Whose life in low estate began,  
 And on a simple village green:

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
 And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known  
 And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
 And shape the whisper of the throne.

And moving up from high to higher,  
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
 The pillar of a people's hope.  
 The centre of a world's desire:



Yet feels as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at Counsellors and Kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands,  
“ Does my old friend remember me ? ”

Yes! this is one of life's commonest experiences. And of this experience on all sides of its possible illustration, — social, moral, and eternal, — we could hardly have a more vivid reminder than in these words concerning the teacher of the Antioch Church in this first great missionary enterprise, that he was the “ foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch.”

A suggestion coming somewhat closer to a distinctly moral and practical principle, in this Scripture-noted association between Herod and Manaen, is the thought that what a man brings with him into the world, brings with him when a helpless infant apparently no more self-determining or definite in moral character than a jelly-fish, has a mighty influence in determining what he is to become.

I used as an illustration a few minutes ago the figure of a drop of water almost accidentally deflected this way or that way in its course to the sea, as typical of the course of human lives. The illustration is partly true, — as I shall have occasion to emphasize further on,—

but it is partly not true, as I am concerned to show just now. Men bring with them into the world a good deal of what determines their character in the world, and their history in going out of it. Here lay these two infants, Herod and Manaen, hardly more than a foot long, drawing sustenance by turns from the same maternal or foster-maternal source. Who could tell of any difference between them? What microscope or dissecting scalpel could have discovered in these two plastic little bundles of physical being the future murderer of John the Baptist and scourger of the meek prisoner of Nazareth, and the future prophet of the Missionary Church of Antioch? No surgeon or bacteriologist could possibly have discerned that invisible something which, to so great an extent, made each what he was. That something came with the little bundle of humanity which we call a baby into the world. Herod was the child of a bad father, — a father whose name has stood these nineteen hundred years as a synonym for brutality, cruelty, and hate, — by one of his nine wives, a woman of the mixed and uncertain blood of the Samaritans, one of the descendants of the people with whom the Jews were taught to have no intercourse. Manaen was, it seems altogether probable, the child of parents not only pure Jews, but Jews of a particularly strict and ascetic religious order. Behind both children lay histories diverse as their destinies. The generations before which had gone to the making of them had been as dissimilar as the pathways they were themselves to tread. No most observant investigator taking up those two little human midgets by turns could say which was to be the prophet and which was to be the murderer. Yet who can doubt

that the solution of the question was even then very largely hid somewhere in those two small lumps of mortal clay?

This is only analogous to what we find to be the facts in relation to all other branches of life. You want a good dog. You are not content to see that the puppy which is offered to you is a very good looking puppy. You want to know what sort of a father and mother he had. A member of the sporting fraternity wants a fast horse. It does not answer to tell him that this colt has good points and has shown remarkable speed. He wants to know whether the colt comes of a family in which speed is an inheritance. I am not a horse-man myself, but my eye fell only a few weeks ago on the account of a race whereof the interest,—an interest that I have no doubt was felt by more persons in this country than would be concerned about the question of who was president of Yale University,—the interest was whether the Mambrino or the Hambletonian family, represented in the two competitors, would beat in the contest.

To a great extent, it is so in the history of human life. This is what gives a sweet, true, honest, godly ancestry its priceless worth. That my father was or was not a millionaire is a question almost insignificant to me, save so far as it might express and cast light on the quality of his character. But that he was a simple, sincere, devout man, who served God and his generation to the best of his powers, is a matter of infinite concernment to me. That my mother wore or did not wear the habiliments of a queen is absolutely beneath consideration. That she was a queen radiant in the light of a pure, true womanhood, and regnant, within

her sphere, by the divine right of a noble character — that is something to the purpose. This is what makes family feeling a justifiable feeling and a matter to be solicitous about. This is what makes the question of matrimonial alliances on the part of young people a question of supremest concern. Are you marrying a man or are you marrying a position, is the question which comes home, if she only knew it aright, to every young bride at the altar. Are you marrying a woman or only a fortune or a fashion plate, is the question for the bridegroom to ponder. Life's happiness for the young people themselves depends on the answer to be given to those questions. Life's result for their posterity, also, is largely involved in the reply. Wise and happy are they who in the solution of this great problem of youthful life put that first which is first, and who choose above bonds and mortgages, or pretty face and fashionable connections, character which is true, and lineage which is without a blot on its scutcheon.

But having said this, which I think is not only justified but compelled by the plain facts of human life, I must suggest that there is, also, another side to the matter which needs as well to be taken into view, and in which the simile of the early deflected water-drop or the early-bent twig has also a place.

We cannot doubt that however Manaen and Herod may have been "brought up together" there were external influences, none-the-less, which diversely co-operated in making them what they became. Herod was the son of Herod and Malthace, and however intimately he was associated with Manaen, it is impossible not to suppose that family instructions and influences had their share in making the son of the slayer of Bethle-

hem's children and of the mongrel-blooded Samaritan woman what he became. On the other hand, however closely associated with Herod Manaen may have been, he was still the son of a devout Jew and Jewess, who cannot be regarded as having forgotten their parental obligations in any temporary lending of the mother or of the child to the welfare of the Herodian family. Manaen was not Malthace's son, and it is not possible that his mother ever allowed him to be treated as if he were. She had her own hold on him, body and soul. And, though the details of the story are all lost to us, we cannot doubt from the issue, — since figs do not grow out of thistles, or corn grow even out of good ground without culture, — that Manaen's mother was as another Hannah in her training of her child. And here is where an element of tremendous power and encouragement appears in dealing with youthful life. It is a good deal like the turning of the water-drop westward to the Pacific or eastward to the Gulf. A power stands at the fountain-head of childhood's being, of incalculable potency in determining its direction and quality. Even supposing there are original wrong tendencies in a child's nature, — the inheritances of a bad ancestry, — who can tell how far these can be corrected and neutralized by patience and fidelity in the plastic days of early impression and of formation of habit? Habit is a tremendous educator. It will accomplish marvelous results, even in the face of inherited obstacles. And habits of right-doing, and to a great extent of right feeling, are the part of parental privilege to inculcate and secure. This is what lends tremendous responsibility, but also not less measureless privilege, to motherly and fatherly influence over youth-

ful life. That influence can never be calculated. It can work wonders even against inherited odds. It is a true saying: "As the twig is bent the tree inclines," and it is as true of the thorn as of the poplar.

And in this work of training human lives, if anywhere in this world, divine aid may be sought and expected. If God hears the ravens when they cry for food for their nestlings, will He not hear parental prayers for the welfare of children of immortality? Doubt we cannot, that, if in any undertaking to which a man can set his hand in this universe the sympathy of God is with him, it is in this work of making better, purer, more honest, more Christian, a child's life. It was this co-operant sympathy of God with parental endeavor, may we not believe, which made the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch one of the teachers of the Church of Antioch and one of the inaugurators of that missionary enterprise which is yet to convert a world to Christ.

## X.

## FILLING UP THAT WHICH IS LACKING.\*

COLOSSIANS I: 24.

*Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church.*

There are some passages of Scripture which are like the world's great battle-fields. Contesting interpretations have wrestled over them, as struggling armies wrestled at Waterloo or Gettysburg. This passage is one of them. Reading the words of our text, the Church of Rome claims that she finds in them a support for her doctrine of supererogatory and substitutive merit in the sufferings of the saints. She appeals to this passage, among others, in defense of the idea of an efficacy in the lives of good men to atone for at least some kinds of guilt. While ascribing, indeed, to Christ the work of atoning for original sin, she accords to human merit and suffering a power to expiate many actual transgressions. The blood of Christ blots out the native and inherent guiltiness of the race; but the blood of martyrs and the tears of saints have also an expiatory office. The lesser lapses of the faithful are cleansed by them. The lighter faults are forgiven

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\* Written in 1869, about five months after the death of his younger son.



for their sake. They constitute a reserve-fund of grace, supplemental to that afforded by the atonement of Christ. This reserved fund of merit is at the Church's disposal. The keys to it are hers. She can apply it to whom she will. Paul, she asserts, was congratulating himself on a contribution that he was making to this fund of supplemental merit, when he wrote :

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church,

But such a doctrine as this has not commended itself to the judgment of men where the Bible has been read in the light which the Reformation shed on its pages. For nothing can be more repugnant to the whole drift, or to the express statements, of Scripture than the idea of any insufficiency, requiring to be supplied from any quarter, in the expiatory work of Christ. On the contrary, that work is uniformly represented as complete in itself. It wants nothing to supplement it. There is nothing which can add to its efficacy. Christ's life and death constitute in themselves a perfect oblation and atonement for human sin. They afford the only ground for its forgiveness. And no apostle has more frequently or powerfully affirmed this complete and all-sufficient character of Christ's work than has Paul. To imagine any insufficiency in Christ's sacrifice, to conceive of any other sacrifice as needful to make up that deficiency, is not only completely opposed to Scripture as a whole, but, if attributed to Paul, places him in the grossest contradiction with himself.

Whatever, therefore, Paul did mean in this passage,



certain it is that he did not mean to imply that his sufferings, or any one's sufferings, were supplemental to the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice.

But in the recoil from this Roman interpretation of the passage under consideration, another view of it has been taken by many Protestant commentators which seems to me in an equal degree erroneous. That interpretation is this.

Paul, it is said, is simply giving utterance to his rejoicing that he is filling up that portion of suffering which has been appointed to him to endure in the cause of Christ. A certain number of trials and hardships had been divinely allotted to him to bear; and some of them were still unborne. They were yet "behind." The measure was not yet full. But it was filling. It would soon be complete. The last of the trials it was appointed to him to endure in the Christian service would soon be encountered; and then the work on his part would be done. He rejoiced, therefore, in his sufferings, as completing that measure and hastening his release.

This interpretation of the Apostle's meaning certainly contains no heresy. It is quite true so far as it is anything. If anyone can content himself with it, it is quite optional to adopt it. But it is an interpretation which simply empties the passage of all value. It seems not accordant with the context, nor with the great-thoughted man who uttered it, nor with the grand Gospel of which he is here affirming one of the grandest of truths.

A meaning far deeper and more wide-reaching than this lies in the language of the Apostle. And this meaning has been discerned in it by many of the

wisest of men whose studies have illuminated for us the Gospel page. I need only refer to Calvin and Melancthon and Grotius and Bengel, among many others, to indicate that the view of the passage I am about to present is one which has commended itself to some of the best interpreters of the sacred Word. The view, then, which I present is this:—

And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the Church.

What are those "afflictions" of Christ? What is it which "remains behind" unfulfilled? The reference here is not to the sufferings which Christ endured in His single person in His work of expiating human sin; but to the afflictions which He bears through the trials of the Church which is His body, and by reason of His unity with it. It is worthy of remark that the Apostle does not say "what is behind of the *παθήματα*, the passion, of Christ; but simply the *θλίψεις*, the afflictions, of Christ; affliction being that common term which is applicable to all human sufferings. In other words, Paul, in this passage, contemplates Christ in the same aspect in which he often elsewhere represents Him, as one with His members. He is so identified with His Church, that what affects it affects Him. As elsewhere, this same Apostle, writing to the Corinthians, sets forth the unity of Christ and His Church under the figure of a human body, in which if one member suffers the whole body suffers, so here he contemplates the afflictions to be endured by the Church identified with Christ as the yet-unfulfilled afflictions of Christ Himself. Nor can we forget, in this connection, what a divine warrant,—a warrant

even from the lips of Christ,— Paul had for this manner of speaking. We do not forget, and surely he never forgot, that word which sounded to him out of the skies above him as he was on his way to carry bonds and imprisonment to the Christians at Damascus. That voice had said to him: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” “Persecutest thou Me!” His persecution of the disciples was persecution of the Master. The woes he inflicted on them were woes inflicted on Him, whose they were. And so was it with all their calamities. Paul never forgot that lesson. He remembered that in all the afflictions of Christ’s people forever, Christ is afflicted. As He suffered once in His own single person for the expiation of human sin, so now He daily shares the sufferings of His people. And much of this kind of affliction remains “yet behind.” The sorrows of Christ’s members are not complete.

But, on the other hand, these sufferings are not limitless. They are fixed in quality and amount. The measure of trouble which the whole Church is to endure is determined. God has appointed the sum. And every labor and sorrow undergone in the Church’s behalf, diminishes the amount. Each drop of bitterness drained out lessens that which is to be drained. Each trial of one,—such is the commission of the saints!—takes away something from that which is to be borne by all. It fills up a little of “that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ,” in “His body, which is the Church.” So the work will go on, through the struggles and sorrows of God’s people, till there are wholly “filled up” those measures of trial which are appointed to Christ’s body by the eternal

plan. Now comes this wonderful Apostle, this simple great soul, and says: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you. I am happy that I may fill up something of what is behind of the sufferings of Christ," which else must fall on some other of His members. Glad am I, that I may thus myself drain some of the bitter drops, which, if I drink not, will be left for other lips. I do it for His body's sake. The more it is permitted me to sustain, the less will be left behind to bear. Grand, generous, wonderful Paul! These are words worthy of thee, and of the Gospel! They fit thy character! They express thy spirit! They utter forth the truth!

Accepting the interpretation of the Apostle's language which has now been set forth, I turn to some suggestions to which it is suited to give rise.

Glance a moment, as one of them, at the sort of life which this conception of his relations to others, and of the office of his sufferings, opened to Paul himself. To him it opened the opportunity of a life of vast and indeterminable benefits to the Church. The stream of good which should flow forth from his labors and sacrifices should flow wide and far. The whole brotherhood, whether they recognized it or not, should share in it. For the heavier the burden pressed on him the lighter would be the load left "behind" to be borne. Such was the solidarity of that companionship created by unity with Christ the common Head, that something should be done for each by the endeavor of any. Paul's life was thus made, in a true sense, a vicarious life. It took on the likeness of Christ's life, in that it was a life by the sacrifices and sufferings of which others were to be blessed. It became a life exemplifying that fellowship with the Saviour, of

which Christ spoke when He said to the sons of Zebedee :

“Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized.”

Yes! there rose thus before the mind of the great Apostle the conception of a life conformed to Christ's in principle, and similar to His in its benefit to men. And he embraced that conception. He seized upon it with joy. He exulted that such a life was possible to him. He permitted nothing to stand in the way of its complete realization. Hear him as he tells us how he strove after it :

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things . . . that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto [or sharing the likeness of] His death !

How well he succeeded in the endeavor! How real was that identification; how wide the benefits to others which flowed from it! Who is there, of all the millions to whom the Gospel has ever come, who has not been a partaker in them? We sit here to-day, in this Christian sanctuary, the wider in mind, the purer in faith, because of the labors and sufferings of this saint of old. The burden presses lighter on us here, because he bore so much of it there. The thoughts of that profound intellect, how they lighten up the Scripture page! What radiance they cast into the deep places of divine truth! Strike from the Bible the Pauline epistles, strike from Christian history the

Pauline story, how vast, how irreparable, the loss, to the Church and to every one of us, its members. We owe a debt of thankfulness to that far-off, much-enduring soul, that we can hardly estimate and never pay. That energy of self-sacrifice — it is our creditor to this hour! That heroism of courage — it holds a claim against us now! Those beatings with rods, those bruising with stones, they purchased something for us, every one!

But I remark, as a second suggestion of the subject before us, that the same principle of unity with Christ and His people in the "afflictions which are behind," has lifted a conception of life, similar to that which Paul had, before many who have preceded us in the Christian service. The filling up of that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His Church's sake, has been the significance of thousands of lives in Christian history. It has been a hope and a glory to them that they might, by their labors or pains, drain out something of the bitterness of human trouble, and make the pathway of Gospel-service easier to those who should come after them. This hope animated the primitive martyrs as they felt the rending fangs of the lions in the amphitheater, or as they burned alive, in pitchy wrappings, in Nero's gardens. It inspired the courage of all that long line of confessors and defenders of the faith, in those stern times when Christianity was waging its battle with Paganism, and so many of its noblest and best died in the conflict. It prompted those who in later times stood up for the simplicity of the Gospel against the corruptions of the Papacy, and so stood at the cost of home and reputation and life. It actuated the fathers of our American

Christianity, who, for the sake of truth, and of those who should come after them, left their native land for a wilderness, and the familiar haunts of cultivated life, for the exile's loneliness, and the pioneer's hardship. And it sustained, too, in every age, the patient, unnoticed efforts of thousands of lowly souls, doing no great and memorable thing, but living loyally to Christ, and trying to lift off whatever little burden they could from the hearts of other men.

These all rejoiced amid their hardship that it was permitted them to fill up something of what was behind of the afflictions of Christ. These exulted that it was given them to endure a little, for His body's sake. They were glad to think the Church would have less to bear, since they had borne what they did. They were rejoiced to feel that fewer strokes would fall upon other members of the one body because so many fell on them.

And how true it is that we have less ! We assemble in our free temples of worship. No manacles fetter our limbs or edicts bind our consciences. We go and come on the sweet ground. No lictor challenges our purpose, no inquisitor dogs our steps. We read our Bible in our households. We teach our children the way to Jesus without the intervention of men. We bury our dead in the acre of God, coveting no priestly unction and dreading no priestly ban.

Why do we do so ? Why are we able so to do ? It is because those who have gone before us have made us able by the portion they have borne in the unfulfilled afflictions of Christ. The price of these things was paid by them. Trace back to whom we owe this debt. You come to the wind-swept graves on Ply-



mouth hillside. You come to the discolored soil and buried ashes where stood the stakes at Smithfield. You come to the cell of Luther and to Wiclif's closet at Lutterworth. You follow back the ascending line, from one generation to another, from one witness or martyr to another, till you find that not an age of Christian history has passed since Paul said: "I fill up something of what is behind of the afflictions of Christ," which has not done something to make lighter your burden, and to leave you in debt to its faithfulness and self-sacrifice.

Yes! we are in debt! The benefits we have are benefits for which we have not paid. We enjoy what we do because other members of the same body have suffered for us. It is because some were found willing to fill up so much of "that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ" that we walk under a load so comparatively light.

But I remark, as a concluding suggestion of our theme, that the same conception of life which this view of the unity of Christ and His people opened to Paul, and to others who have gone before us, is open also to ourselves. Our greatest privilege in living is in "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." If we would but appreciate aright our calling and opportunity, we should rejoice most of all, that we can live "for His body's sake, which is the Church." For the things "which are behind" are yet many. Not yet,—notwithstanding all that He has undergone in the person of His members,—not yet are His afflictions full. The Church has trials and conflicts still to undergo. The individual membership numbers many a son and daughter of trouble still.



On how many does sorrow press ! How many does penury grip with cruel hand ! What darkness remains to be lightened ; what woe to be comforted ; what struggles to be aided ; what wanderings to be restored ! And we can alleviate some of that sorrow. Some of that burden we can bear. Our efforts and self denials and, if it need be, our afflictions and pains, can do at least a little of it. This is a vicarious world. Its central fact is Calvary, and the great law of relationship in it, is relationship through sacrifice.

Not, indeed, that we are, in any ascetic spirit, willfully to invent and impose sufferings upon ourselves. Not that suffering is an object in itself. But he that will put his shoulder under the world's great load,—he that will, in any department of labor for his kind, fill up something of what is yet behind,—will do it, must do it, at the cost of many a pain. This world was not lifted to the possibility of salvation without the agony and death of the Son of God ; and it cannot be brought to the experience of salvation realized, without the toils and anguish of many a saint. Redemption was begotten in sacrifice, and it is perfected only through struggle and pain. But every true Christian effort,—yea, every real Christian tear,—does something to bring that perfection nearer.

What a thought of cheer for many a humble unnoticed soul there is in this fact ! How much wider was the reach of that soul's sufferings than it knew ! You thought, dear friend, perhaps that your agonized prayer did nothing. You thought your quiet Christian patience in bearing your trouble had no result. When you endured sickness with submission, or bereavement with quietude, or watched with Christlike

solicitude over a wayward son, or a sinning husband, you had no thought your work reached beyond yourself, and perhaps the immediate object of your effort. Ah! but it did! The fellowship of that body in which Christ's members are joined makes it impossible for one to stand alone. Your solitary, hidden grief is not unknown to Him whose very member you are. Something of what remains for Him to fill up, you have been permitted to bear. You have a part in the great fulfillment! Do not think you are useless or alone. The solidarity of the Christian union secures something of benefit to the whole from the conflict or the suffering of each.

This presents to us a conception of life we shall do well to ponder. Oh! not for Paul only, not for the fathers dead, was this conception set before us in the Great Exemplar, Jesus of Bethlehem and Golgotha. That example was set that all might imitate. That life was lived that it might forever inspire.

My friends, the true problem of life to a Christian man is not how to get the most of ease and the least of pain this world can give. The great object of existence is not to surround oneself with the pleasures of life and to ward off from us its pains. No! the true object, the Christlike object, is to lift the burden from others' shoulders by taking it on our own, to alleviate others' pains by bearing them ourselves. This is to do as Paul did, and as He did whose example inspired Paul. This is to fill up something of what is behind of the afflictions of Christ.

And it seems to me, my hearers, that now is a time when it is peculiarly fit that such a conception of the object of life should be presented and thoughtfully

considered. Wealth increases among us. Life is taking on yearly more luxurious habits. We are surrounding ourselves more and more with appliances of ease, and studying with increasing solicitude how to make refined and beautiful our lot. Meanwhile around us sighs the burdened world. Meanwhile hands are held out to us from every side. There are mourners to be comforted. There are ignorant to be taught. There are poor to be clothed. There are hungry to be fed. Meanwhile, too, the Church is maintaining her struggle with the world. She needs the effort of every member; not the cold partial allegiance, but the full, consecrated endeavor of every one who is reckoned of her fold. For vast and arduous is the work yet to be done. The afflictions of Christ are not yet full. Partakers in His sufferings are needed still.

O my brothers; O my sisters: shall we accept the opportunity? Is there anything in us to answer to the call? That which is yet "behind" is to be supplied. By the struggles of some it is surely to be filled! Who shall they be? Who of this congregation will make it henceforth the purpose of his life to add something to that sum which at last shall be accounted complete?

## XI.

## THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS.\*

LUKE XII : 57.

*“And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”*

It is a very interesting circumstance connected with this appeal of Christ to the capacity of right judgment in His hearers that it was not addressed to His acknowledged disciples. Our Saviour had been saying some exceedingly important and even mysterious things, apparently in a mixed audience of His own followers and of others. He had spoken of the providential care of God as shown in His provision for the ravens, His clothing of the lilies, and of His greater care of men. And from that point of instruction He had proceeded, after His customary manner, to rise to the teaching of higher and more occult truths concerning the nature and near approach of the kingdom of heaven, and the duty of constant readiness for the coming of the Son of Man.

Peter seems to have been a little doubtful as to just how far this discourse was intended for the public generally, or only for him and his few associates. And he asked the point-blank question, “Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?” The

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\* Written in December, 1891.

Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?" His reply is, in effect: "I address whoever has the ear to hear. I am stating facts and principles of universal application and interest. Any man who discerns their truthfulness, and especially who acts on their truthfulness, is My accepted hearer. What I say is reasonable as well as right, and blessed is the man who hears and obeys." But that there might be left no doubt in Peter's mind, or in anybody's mind, as to the broad and inclusive character of His address He turned distinctly to the "multitude"—the "people" who were looking on with uncommitted, and some of them, probably, inimical curiosity—and said to them, in effect, Why do you not exercise your own reason and instructed faculties about the truth or falsity of what I have been telling you?

"When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass. And when ye see a south wind blowing, ye say, There will be a scorching heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time? And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

Thus by the strongest of all possible forms of affirmation,—a direct reproachful challenge for not using faculties they had and could employ,—Christ affirmed an existent power in the minds of even His opponents and enemies to judge concerning the things of which He told them. He appealed to faculties divinely implanted in them to have some opinion about the truthfulness of His words. As there were signs in nature

which the eye could recognize, and which answered to the truth of things in the physical realm, so there were signs in the spiritual world which might be discerned by one intent and willing to discern them, which answered also to the truth of things in matters of that domain. A man ought to recognize such signs. A man could recognize such signs. A man was to blame for not recognizing such signs. Even an opponent might be appealed to with the reproachful and condemnatory inquiry,—at once a testimony to his capacity of in some measure judging of the truth in religious things, and of his neglect to employ the capacity which he had,—“Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”

Now it seems to me, as I said at the outset, that this utterance of Christ, addressed confessedly to hearers not His disciples, is an extraordinarily interesting one. It has a very direct bearing upon a question a good deal agitated in theological circles to-day. It casts an illuminating gleam upon one of the great party watchwords of our time. And the brief examination of the Master's saying “to the multitude” which we have now made may, I hope, have prepared the way for some sober and reasonable consideration of what that watchword suggests.

The party shibboleth of which I speak is what is called the “Christian consciousness.” It is used with about equal frequency in both camps of current theological partisanship, progressive and conservative alike. But it is used, of course, with different accent. With the one it is a word of honor; with the other it is a word of reproach. When a writer or preacher, who is understood to be of what is called the more advanced

school of theology among us, makes reference to "Christian consciousness" as one of the sources of light on religious truth, he is at once, by some of his more conservative brethren, accused of elevating human authority to a co-ordinate place with divine revelation, or a place even of superiority to it. When, on the other hand, the phrase "Christian consciousness" is referred to in the utterances of our more conservative divines it is generally in terms which lead their opponents to allege the disparagement or denial of some of the plainest of historic facts, and some of the most obvious of the apparently divinely intended operations of the human intellect.

Now, is there any necessity of this warfare among brethren? Is there any unavoidable need of their misunderstanding and misinterpreting one another? Is there not some common, fair, middle-ground on which they can stand and use the phrase in question,—which seems to have gotten a pretty secure place in modern religious literature,—in a mutually understood and even mutually acceptable significance? The question seems to me important enough for me to do what I seldom do in this pulpit,—that is, to call your attention to a particular phase of current discussion in the theological world.

Now it may, I think, be frankly admitted by those who use this term most frequently that the term itself, "Christian consciousness," is a very ambiguous one. Strictly speaking, what is there which can possibly be more individual and incommunicable than consciousness? I am conscious of being hot or cold. I am conscious of being right or wrong. But my consciousness of these things is not your consciousness. Yours



is not mine. Consciousness is a thing not to be confused, intermingled, generalized. When, therefore, the word consciousness is employed, as in the phrase "Christian consciousness," to signify something beside individual experience; something belonging rather to collective convictions; an only moderately strict constructionist in the use of language is bound to admit that the phrase is ambiguous, if not self-contradictory. But so are a score of phrases we use in religion and in common life ambiguous. Half the controversies which have ever risen in mental philosophy and theology are the result of the ambiguity of the terms employed. Even in politics and general affairs the differences of men largely result from the diversity of interpretation put on the words they alike use. Free-trader or protectionist, for example — how vague and ambiguous the use of these terms in political affairs is! Take a high protectionist newspaper, and it calls every man a free-trader, however he may advocate a tariff for revenue, unless he advocates one also for the guardianship of what are called "infant industries." Take an ultra free-trade newspaper, and it calls every man a protectionist, notwithstanding he may ever so carefully discriminate between a tariff for necessary public expenses, and a tariff for support of favored manufactures. And then they go on battling away at each other, largely on a mere matter of ambiguity of terms. Now I hold no commission to defend the correctness of this phrase "Christian consciousness." I certainly did not invent it; nor do I in general belong to the school or party in recent religious thinking which did invent it and by which it is chiefly employed. But I hope I may be fair enough to try to



understand what its users mean by it, and not, — either because of the ambiguity of the word itself, or because of dissent from any of the views of those who mainly employ it, — insist that it must mean something antagonistic to what is true.

What then, — the ambiguity of the phrase being frankly admitted, — do those who speak of Christian consciousness really understand by the term? So far as I am able to judge from a considerable reading of the religious literature in which the phrase is employed, it means that common concensus or conviction which, under the protracted operation of divine influences upon the minds of men, grows up in the general body of believers. It is a conviction which may relate to things more definitely or less definitely revealed in Scripture, but respecting which, for one reason or another, such a general conviction and agreement is arrived at that it may almost be called a common consciousness of its reality.

Now who does not see that in point of fact, — laying aside any question of infelicity in the term by which such a common conviction is called, — that such a common conviction does exist in reference to many religious truths, and exist in such a degree and measure as to be spoken of as something distinct from the materials upon which it is founded? For example, there is a common conviction among religious people that God is a loving being. It may be said to be an affirmation of “Christian consciousness” that He is so. And when you say that Christian consciousness declares the loving character of God, you do not stop to analyze the growth of that consciousness. You do not say that it is built up from this or that text

of Scripture; from this or that recorded act of the divine behavior. You appeal to it as something which — grown however it may have done — now stands a substantial commonly accepted conviction, real almost as one's consciousness of life, that God is love.

But the growth, in this sense, of a common Christian conviction or consciousness is not merely real and powerful in relation to things which are clearly revealed in Scripture; it is to be discerned also in things wherein the utterances of Scripture are either not clear or are not so clear that they have not in point of fact been capable of various interpretations by Christian men. A most interesting example of the working of this principle is just now held up to our notice in the experience of our brethren of the Presbyterian Church in this country. Our friends of that fellowship are engaged in a struggle for the revision of their creed. Not to mention other points in which they are disquieted about it — and there are several — one important point in it which gives them uneasiness is the utterance of the third section of the tenth chapter of their Confession of Faith, which reads thus: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ." The Confession does not say what becomes of non-elect infants, and does not even in positive terms say that there are any. But language has no significance if those words do not imply that there are such non-elect infants; nor can we doubt that the theological system generally formulated in that document and generally held by its framers and by their predecessors, implies that there may be a great many. Why, then, is the Presbyterian body trying to get rid of that phrase to-day? Why is it just as certain ultimately to

be got rid of, by an expurgation from the creed or by a supersedure of the old creed by a new confession, as that to-morrow morning's sun will rise ?

Can anybody pretend that the change in that body by which that obnoxious phrase and implication will sooner or later disappear, — as it has disappeared from the later doctrinal statements of our own body which formerly held the same creed, — is simply and purely owing to a correcter exegetical interpretation of the passages of Scripture which bear on the matter of God's dealings with infants ? It is due to no such thing. The conviction which demands such an alteration in the creed did not arise in any such way. It arose because of a growing assurance in the heart and mind of the Church that the love and pity of God as revealed generally in His Word and providence, and grace, did not justify any such interpretation of Scripture as requires such a declaration concerning elect-infants, or allows such an implication concerning non-elect ones. The revolution has been a silent growth in Christian consciousness of the significance of God's love and grace to men. It was not born in the study of the grammarian, but by the cradle-side and grave-side of infancy, where consecrated paternal and maternal hearts, fathoming a little of the love of God by the limited plummet line of their own love, revolted from an interpretation of the ways of God with childhood which did violence to all else that they knew of Him, and which crowded Scripture to the wall in support of a statement against which every instinct of the human heart and every known attribute of the divine protest.

A somewhat similar illustration of the growth of

general convictions, — what some of our friends call of a Christian consciousness, — may be found in another quarter. It is not so very long ago since advocates of missionary enterprise based their plea almost exclusively on the hopeless condition of men outside the limits of Christian enlightenment and civilization. When the American Board was formed eighty-two years ago it was not felt to be an extravagant or abhorrent statement to represent the whole heathen world as flowing in an unbroken cataract of irremediable doom into the abyss of eternal despair. Such representations, scarcely qualified by possible exceptions, were common in pulpits and on missionary platforms. Such representations are not made, or very seldom made, now. Why are they not? For this reason among others. We all know that Christian men and women have sought relief from the terrible idea of the hopeless loss of all the heathen world, in some way compatible with the teachings of the word of God. One of these ways, — and a way elaborately presented in the annual sermon preached before the Board at Detroit in 1886, — is in a hoped-for greater inclusiveness of the saving grace of God outside the reach of the Gospel, through the light of nature and the operations of the Spirit, than we have always supposed; and another is by the idea, advocated in some quarters, of an opportunity in another life of an offer of salvation for those who never heard of Christ here.

Now without at all entering here into any argument, as I have on some other occasions done, as to the relative scripturalness of these two different ways in which the difficulty is attempted to be solved, my present point of inquiry is, why was resort had to either of

these two views? Why did not people just sit down quietly under the conception, so long entertained, of the utter and irremediable loss of everybody outside the limits of historical Christianity? Was it because of the compellant power of an exacter exegesis? Did more hopeful views of the reach of God's grace grow out, primarily, of a correcter use of the grammar and the lexicon of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures? Not at all. They grew out of a softening of the minds and hearts of men under the influence of the Gospel, which led them to ask, "Is there not some way compatible with the Scriptures which we have read so long without discerning it, whereby the love of God for sinful men and the adequacy of His grace for their help shall not be so frustrated and denied as it is in these views which we have entertained, without questioning, so great a while? The inquiry started in the mind enlightened by Christian truth and warmed by Christian love. The question was brought to the test of consonancy with the general spirit of the Gospel. It was tried by the Christian consciousness, if one chooses to call it so; and then Scripture was interrogated more carefully for an answer. Not in grammar and lexicography first, but in love and pity taught by Christ, did the impelling power lie which put men on interrogating anew the revealed Word, to see what the truth on this matter is.

But the contrariety of these two answers, which I have said have been given to the same question, conducts me to another suggestion respecting this matter of Christian consciousness, so called, very important to be considered. Christian consciousness, — by which I mean, as has been explained, the general

consent of men under the light of the Gospel, — cannot any way supersede Scripture; perhaps cannot always successfully arbitrate between obscure or doubtful revelations of Scripture. Here, if anywhere, is the danger which lies in admitting the enlightened convictions of matured piety to any place in the consideration and determination of religious truth. There is danger, constituted as men are, that the power which, as I have tried to show, is divinely lodged in them to judge of religious things, and which experience in religious things certainly tends to make more perfect in its exercise, should be abused. There is peril lest it should arrogate to itself functions above its proper place, and not merely judge where Scripture is silent or obscure, but decide where Scripture speaks, and sometimes decide against what Scripture says. This danger is real. But what then? Shall one forego altogether the exercise of a power because it can be abused? What gift of God is there which cannot be perverted to evil? Because a grain of calomel sometimes does a man good, are we to argue that half a pound of it would be better? Or because an ounce of laudanum will kill, shall we say twenty drops of it can in no case be used? Do we need to be told that faith is a saving grace, in spite of the fact that some have made an alleged faith to be the shelter for all unrighteousness?

Christian consciousness, despite the infelicity of the name, is something which has a real place in the discernment of religious truth. The collective sentiment of the minds of men under the operations of the Spirit of God does not go for nothing. The practical and important question is, What place has it; and within

what fixed boundaries only, if any, has it its proper sphere?

There should, I think, be no real doubt on this matter. This is one of the questions which, under somewhat different terminology indeed, came up in the recent trial of Professor Briggs before the New York Presbytery. In that trial, which, as you know, resulted in a dismissal of the charges against the Professor,—though an appeal was indeed taken to the Synod from the dismissal,—one charge which had been brought against the Professor was that he had declared that there were “three fountains of divine authority [in religion], the Bible, the Church, and the reason”; from which declaration made by him the inference was drawn by others that these three were alike sufficient and equal sources of religious light. This inference the Professor denied. He held that while the Church was one source of religious authority, reason and conscience was another; but when the Bible spoke definitely on any point its utterance was decisive. This answer satisfied the majority of the Presbytery on this point,—I am not now speaking of any other point in what is called the Briggs case,—and I think it ought to satisfy everybody.

And, similarly, as to what is meant in the term which I have repeatedly spoken of as an infelicitous one, “Christian consciousness.” It is idle to deny that the thing intended to be covered by that phrase is a real thing, and that it has a real place and power in the making up of religious opinions. But when the question asked is, What place has it, and what power belongs to it? you come to the spot where the danger about it first arises. You come substantially



to the place to which Dr. Briggs came when asked what reason's function is in religious matters. And I think among fair-minded men the answer which satisfies us respecting the function of the reason ought to satisfy us with respect to the Christian consciousness, so-called. It has a place among the sources of religious conviction. But, under the necessities of the case, it is a subordinate place. It can speak corroboratively of the things of which revelation distinctly tells; and this is, indeed, its most frequent utterance, and men have loved to dwell on this phase of its affirmations in all ages, as affording an interesting confirmation of the truth of the written Word. It can speak with less assurance, certainly, but still with a voice deserving attention, in the silences of Scripture; telling, when revelation does not speak at all, what seems to be accordant with the general trend of the Gospel on any point considered. But it cannot contradict the clearly revealed truth of God in Scripture. It has not authority, and it ought not to be supposed to have, to deny what inspiration has declared. Consciousness can never surpass in its prerogative that Word of truth by whose aid it is mainly that such a thing as Christian consciousness has ever come to be at all. If any one sets up this judge as one of co-ordinate and equal power with the authentic Scriptures of divine truth, I, for one, part company with him at that point. The divine Word is the arbiter and final authority.

Yet simply because a man refers, even in infelicitous terms, to Christian consciousness as a source of Christian light, I do not find reason for denouncing him as a heretic or an opponent of the Gospel. The thing he may mean,—let us be fair,—the thing he



probably does mean, is a real thing. In certain of its manifestations we, and all the most orthodox of our progenitors, have rejoiced always. The point to be determined is, does he hold the idea in an exaggerated way incompatible with the authority which must belong of course supremely to any veritable "Thus saith the Lord"? If he does, why then we can have no fellowship with that error. Our roads must needs separate at that point. But up to that point we can go in companionship; and it is not kind or Christian to accuse him of going beyond that point without clear evidence. The probabilities are that the things he holds are the things you hold on this matter; just as Dr. Briggs and his Presbytery found themselves, on the question of the place of reason in religion, nearer together than some had suspected.

While, therefore, I think it is important, — and now, because of the larger hearing given than sometimes before to what Christian consciousness says, especially important, — to emphasize the supreme authority in religious things of the Word of God; I still think it equally important not to forget also the lessons which are conveyed in such a saying of Christ's as we have been considering to-day, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Surely the instruction of the Holy Spirit promised to the Church of God to "guide into all truth" has not been eighteen hundred years in vain! Surely there ought to be an agreement of Christian experience and a consensus of Christian judgment on some points as the result of that tutelage and guidance. And it is pleasant and impressive to consider, both in our individual capacities and in our collective associations, that the nearer we come to the

Master, and the closer our fellowship is with Him, the more likely it will be that our convictions will be true and our conjectures, even in points not clearly revealed, will be harmonious with the mind of Christ. It was not any mere man who said it; it was the Master Himself who declared, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

May that good Spirit of light and truth guide us into all truth; keep us from all error; open our hearts to the reception of "every Scripture inspired of God"; nor leave us insensitive, either, to those less visible and unrecorded suggestions of that "Spirit" which "searcheth all things," the result whereof, on apostolic testimony, is that "he that is spiritual judgeth all things."

## XII.

## FROM SCROOBY TO PLYMOUTH.\*

PSALM CVII: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8.

[As quoted from Governor Bradford's History.]

“ Let them therefore praise y<sup>e</sup> Lord, because he is good, & his mercies endure for ever. Yea, let them which have been redeemed of y<sup>e</sup> Lord, shew how he hath delivered them from y<sup>e</sup> hand of y<sup>e</sup> oppressour. When they wandered in y<sup>e</sup> deserte willdernes out of y<sup>e</sup> way, and found no citie to dwell in, both hungrie, & thirstie, their sowle was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before y<sup>e</sup> Lord his loving kindnes, and his wonderfull works before y<sup>e</sup> sons of men.”

This Sunday falls upon a memorable anniversary. Two hundred and seventy years ago to-day some of the sea-buffed voyagers of a little ship which four months and six days before had left the harbor of Southampton in old England, set foot on the shore of the harbor of Plymouth in New England. Boughs of evergreen and running vines of prince's pine were visible to their eyes, sick with sight of Atlantic waves, as they are visible to our eyes to-day.† But under how different conditions of visibility! Very likely they would not have approved these decorations we see about us this morning. They would have been re-

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\* Preached December 21, 1890.

† The church was decorated for Christmas.

mindful of experiences which gave them a right to their opinions. If altered conditions of life make the thing pleasant to us, which would have been in their day obnoxious to them, let us remember it is mainly because of their sturdy adherence to their convictions that it is safe for us to indulge our tastes.

I intend, in memory of those good men and women of two hundred and seventy years ago, to tell this morning, as briefly as I can, the simple story of what brought them on that December day to the barren shores of Plymouth, and how they fared on the journey and afterward. I do this, not for the benefit of the elders of this congregation, who presumably have the story in mind, but I remember that we have a good many young people growing up among us; and that young people's time is taken up with a thousand matters,—school, and amusements, and the numberless books of current literature and travel,—and so I think it may be well on this anniversary day to recall a little while an event which had so much to do with the interests of Christ's kingdom in this Western world; and so much also to do with making us what we personally are who are gathered here to-day.

When James the First came to the throne of England, on the death of Queen Elizabeth, in 1603, a good many Christian people in that country who had been oppressed by the legislation enacted under Elizabeth to secure uniformity in the Established, that is to say, the Episcopal Church, hoped for a while that some relief would be accorded to those whose consciences dissented from that way of worship, and especially from what they regarded as the Papistic ceremonies connected with it. James at home in Scotland was a

Presbyterian; so that they thought that there was a fair likelihood that dissenters from the Episcopal way would at least be tolerated. But they were disappointed. James was a learned, conceited, pragmatic, obstinate man, who thought himself a great theologian, and whose head was turned by the sudden accession to him of kingly power, not over the little and poor kingdom of Scotland, where he had for a considerable time more or less comfortably ruled, but over the rich and great kingdom of England. A request was made to him, on his journey up from Edinburgh to London, approved by above eight hundred ministers, and presented by a distinguished company of Puritan scholars, that a little more liberty in methods of worship might be allowed. They were met only with taunts and offensive lecturings; the king winding up the conference with the command to "awaie with their snyvelings," and a declaration that he would "make them conform or harrie them out of the land, or worse." Among the people against whom these threats were uttered were some of the chiefest men of piety and learning in the whole country. There were masters of colleges, ministers occupying some of the foremost pulpits of the kingdom, learned and honorable laymen in various professions and walks of business.

It is doubtful whether, in the consideration of these more prominent dissenters from the requirements of uniformity in worship, any very public attention was turned to a little company of people up in the northerly part of England near the junction of the counties of York, Nottingham, and Lincoln, who had come to adopt what we now call the Congregational way of church fellowship and worship. They lived in various

little villages in that region, but held most of their public services in the hall of an old manor-house, since destroyed, at the little hamlet of Scrooby, about forty miles west from the seaport town of Boston in Lincolnshire. Belonging to this company were the two ministers, Richard Clyfton and John Robinson. William Brewster, who was postmaster at Scrooby, was ruling elder of the church; George Morton and young William Bradford, afterward to be the chroniclers of the enterprise, and the second of them Governor of the Plymouth Colony, were with them.

The people had to come to the place of worship in the old and somewhat dilapidated manor-house, leased by Brewster, the postmaster, from a wide section of country scattered around, where they were entertained by him "at his greate charge." But neither the obscurity of the place nor the semi-official protection accorded them awhile by the postmaster could long hide them from the persecution which had been determined on against all Separatists from the Established Church. So, in 1607, after being, as their historian, Bradford, says, "hunted & persecuted on every side," and some "taken & clapt up in prison," while others "had their houses besett & wacht night and day," they concluded to try to get out of the country to Holland. In their first attempt to do so they were unsuccessful. The captain of the ship which took them and their goods aboard at old Boston betrayed them to the authorities, who hurried them, as Bradford says, back to the shore, and "rifled & ransaked them, searching them to their shirts for money, yea even y<sup>e</sup> women funder then became modestie; and then caried them back into y<sup>e</sup> towne, & made them a spectackle & wonder to y<sup>e</sup> mul-

titude." After a month's imprisonment most of them were dismissed, but Brewster, Bradford, and five others were confined some time longer.

Their second attempt, in the spring of 1608, was hardly better. The Dutch skipper who had been engaged to meet them at a secluded point of the coast to take them to Holland was late in keeping his appointment, and when only one large boat load had been got aboard, was alarmed at the appearance of officers on the shore, and straightway set sail with those he had, leaving the distracted remainder — husbands separated from wives, children from parents, in many cases moneyless and clothingless — on Grimsby Beach, behind him. A better endeavor was made, however, in August, and the conclusion of the year 1608 saw the broken families and sundered congregation for the most part reunited in Amsterdam. Here, as Bradford says, "they heard a strange & uncouth language, and beheld y<sup>e</sup> differente mañers & customes of y<sup>e</sup> people, with their strange fashions and attires; all so farre differing from y<sup>t</sup> of their plaine countrie villages, . . . as it seemed they were come into a new world. But these were not y<sup>e</sup> things they much looked on, or long tooke up their thoughts; for they had other work in hand, & another kind of warr to wage & maintaine. For though they saw faire & bewtifull cities, flowing with abundance of all sorts of welth & riches, yet it was not longe before they saw the grime & grisly face of povertie coming upon them like an armed man, with whom they must bukle & incounter, and from whom they could not flye."

Finding their situation at Amsterdam for various reasons undesirable, they moved next year — 1609 —



to Leyden ; where, in reply to their request for the privilege of residence, they were answered by the burghermasters that all "honest folks" were allowed to live, on condition of submission to the "laws and ordinances." Scattered at this time through Holland were other English congregations. But most of these other congregations were not, like themselves, Separatists or Independents. They were Presbyterian, either of the English or Scotch variety, and so were in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Holland Presbyterian churches of that order. Hence these Presbyterian churches met a very different reception in Holland from the authorities than did the Scrooby company of Congregationalists. The Presbyterians were accorded places of public worship ; their pastors were generally admitted to the privileges of the universities ; in many instances aid was granted to the exiled congregations from the public treasury. The Separatist Church, under Robinson, fared far differently. There is no evidence that any public recognition was ever given them as a body during the nearly twelve years of their residence there. They worshiped in their own houses ; mainly in the house of John Robinson, their pastor. It is true that after the strife between the Calvinistic party and the Arminian party in the Dutch churches themselves had got hot and tempestuous, and Mr. Robinson had openly taken the Calvinistic side in a public debate, he was tardily—about six years after the beginning of his residence in the city—admitted to the privileges of the university ; and that several years after the main body of his Church had left for America he had the privilege of being buried, at his own charges, in St. Peter's Church



in that city. But the fear of offending King James prevented any public recognition of the Separatist Church by the Netherland authorities, even had they been inclined otherwise to recognize them, of which there is no evidence.

The sometimes boasted toleration existent in Holland at that time was not the voluntary allowance of diverse opinions in religious matters which we understand by that word ; it was a suspension of hostilities between sect and sect to a certain extent, and on the part of the government against any one sect ; partly in a canny view of the economic advantages of such suspended hostilities at a time when Holland needed the full strength of all its inhabitants ; but mainly by the pressure of a national fear of Spain, against whose asserted and long fought-for supremacy over the Netherlands all parties, — Catholics, Protestants, and sects of all kinds, — were ready to combine.

Here, at Leyden, working at “such trades & employments as they best could” ; living peaceably among themselves ; growing old as to their leaders, and seeing a new generation rising up amid the temptations of a strange land, which never could be a home, the Scrooby company lived between eleven and twelve years. Slowly but strongly the conviction grew in them that this could not last. They were, for the most part, poor, hard-worked, and hopeless as to the future of any prosperity for themselves or for the cause they represented in that land. So a considerable part of them determined to emigrate to America, — that new, strange country which was then attracting the wondering interest of so many.

They knew something of the hardships of the under-

taking. As their historian, Bradford, says, they knew "they should be liable to famine, and nakednes, & y<sup>e</sup> wante, in a maner, of all things. . . . And also those which should escape or overcome these difficulties, should yett be in continuall danger of y<sup>e</sup> salvage people, who are cruell, barbarous, & moste trecherous . . . not being contente only to kill, & take away life, but delight to tormente men in y<sup>e</sup> most bloodie maner that may be; fleaing some alive with y<sup>e</sup> shells of fishes; cutting of y<sup>e</sup> members & joynts of others by peesmeale and broiling on y<sup>e</sup> coles, eate y<sup>e</sup> collops of their flesh in their sight while they live, with other cruelties horrible to be related." However, none of these things moved them, and they made up their minds to go. They offered to go to the Dutch American settlements if they could be assured of protection, but the Dutch declined. Ultimately they made arrangements with a company called "The Adventurers," holding a tract of land to be selected by the planters somewhere in the vicinity of the mouth of the Hudson.

In July, 1620, therefore, the Leyden congregation held a fast, and had religious ceremonies in view of the great event which was to witness the separation of one part from another among them, and the setting out on the long and perilous undertaking. It was probably in the long summer evening of the same day that both sections of the company were towed down the canal to Delfthaven, fourteen miles away, where the *Speedwell*, a little sixty-ton pinnace, was lying to take them across to Southampton in England. The next morning saw a fair wind pulling at the already loosened *Speedwell's* sails, and on the wharf beside her some-

what over two hundred men, women, and children, some to go, and some to stay, but all bound together by the experiences of exile in a strange land, and of faith in the same way of religious living for which they had left one home, and were, most of them, about to seek another. They kissed each other, and the pastor prayed with them, and so tender was their parting that even the Dutch wharf-loungers, who could not understand their speech, were moved to tears at sight of their pathetic farewells.

They soon, and without special event, got across to Southampton. Here was lying the *Mayflower*, a vessel of about one and twenty tons, present mode of measurement,—not half as large as some of the coal schooners which come occasionally to our Hartford wharves,—getting ready for the Atlantic voyage. The crowded decks and cabins of the little *Speedwell* were relieved of the majority of their passengers. Ninety were assigned to the *Mayflower*, and thirty remained on the smaller vessel. But they had difficulties about getting away. Thomas Weston, the manager of the “Adventurers’ Company,” not himself a Pilgrim, or even an honest man, quarreled with them about the terms of their agreement, which he had connived to have altered without their assent, so that they had to pay the port charges of the vessels, and to do so had to sell a part of their provisions to meet the unlooked-for expense. The money being however at last raised, on the 15th of August the two vessels dropped down the tide at Southampton, and, putting out against head winds, which promised soon to be stormy, set sail for the New World. But four days out the master of the *Speedwell* reported his little vessel to be leaking badly.

So both vessels bore up and entered Dartmouth harbor. Here ten days were spent in discharging and relading the *Speedwell*, and in examining her from stem to stern, though no considerable occasion for the master's allegations were found.

Once more the vessels started out in company. Land's End had been sunk out of sight three hundred miles behind them, when the *Speedwell* again signaled her consort that she was in an almost sinking condition. Again the disappointed voyagers put about, and this time ran into Plymouth, on the southwest corner of Devonshire. Here once more the *Speedwell* was overhauled, but though no sufficient cause of apprehension was found, the master and crew so strenuously insisted on the vessel's unseaworthiness that it was concluded to send her back to London. So her passengers were divided,—twelve joining the ninety already aboard the *Mayflower*, and eighteen giving up the enterprise. Bradford alleges that this complaint of the *Speedwell's* unseaworthiness was a "stratagem" of the master of the vessel. The ship was probably somewhat strained by being over-masted. But its master and crew had grown fearful over the prospect of remaining the year, for which their contract called, across the Atlantic. And it is not surprising, also, that the courage of a few of the emigrants themselves proved inadequate to further trials.

However, a third start was made,—this time September 16th,—the *Mayflower* riding over the waters alone. But much time had been lost, and the equinoctial gales had come. In one of these storms "one of the main beames in y<sup>e</sup> midd ships was bowed & craked, which put them in some fear that y<sup>e</sup> shipe could not be able

to performe y<sup>e</sup> vioage." They had to lie-to for days, unable to carry sail. However, by the aid of a great jack-screw, which some good carpenter of the Leyden company had put aboard for its expected usefulness in the new country, the big beam was straightened up and supported by braces, and with quieter seas the vessel was put on her devious course again. I cannot pause to enlarge on the various experiences of the crowded, weather-beaten company of men, women, and little children in that long and stormy passage. One "proud & very profane yonge man, one of y<sup>e</sup> sea-men," who, as Bradford says, "would allway be contemning y<sup>e</sup> poore people in their sicknes, & cursing them," and telling them "that he hoped to help to cast halfe of them over board before they came to their jurneys end," was himself struck with a "greeveous disease" and "dyed in a desperate maner, and so was him selfe y<sup>e</sup> first y<sup>t</sup> was throwne overbord." One of their own company also succumbed to the hardships of the voyage and was buried at sea. But at last, on the morning of the sixty-fifth day after their third and last start from the English shore, they caught welcome sight of land, but not the land to which they were expecting to go. Instead of being in the vicinity of Hudson River, they found themselves off Cape Cod. The captain stood off to sea again, about half a day, but managed to fall "amongst deangerous shoulds and roring breakers," so that they "thought them selves hapy to gett out of those dangers" and back next day into "y<sup>e</sup> Cape-harbor where they ridd in saftie." Here, then, just inside the protecting finger of the Cape, the coming of November 21st found the vessel at anchor in comparative safety.

But here was a political dilemma as grave, almost, as the physical ones they had before encountered. The "Adventurers' Company," under whose auspices they had nominally sailed, claimed some sort of right under the Virginia patent. Now, landing up here to the north of latitude  $41^{\circ}$ , they stood on no definite grant whatever, and outside of all established authority. Yet they were equal to the emergency. They were not law-breakers or freebooters and did not intend to dispense with justice or rule. The adult male members of the company were assembled into the cabin and the state of the case explained. As a result of the conference the following document was drawn up and signed:—

"In y<sup>e</sup> name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James, by y<sup>e</sup> grace of God, of Great Britaine, Franc, & Ireland king, defender of y<sup>e</sup> faith, &c. haveing undertaken, for y<sup>e</sup> glorie of God, and advancemente of y<sup>e</sup> Christian faith, and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant y<sup>e</sup> first colonie in y<sup>e</sup> Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly & mutuallly in y<sup>e</sup> presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of y<sup>e</sup> ends afore-said; and by vertue hearof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for y<sup>e</sup> generall good of y<sup>e</sup> Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience."

This document was apparently signed by forty-one names, the first six of which seem to have been John Carver,—the governor of the new little commonwealth,—William Bradford, Edward Winslow, William Brewster, Isaac Allerton, Myles Standish, and John Alden.

Thus in an hour the Pilgrim company had become a government. But the sandy point of Cape Cod was no place for a colony. The next thirty of the shortening wintry days were employed by the leaders of the band in exploring in the little shallop brought by them on the *Mayflower*, the Cape and the region of the main land across the bay for a proper place for a settlement. The explorers met in these expeditions many curious adventures, and encountered many hardships. They saw several groups of Indians, and had an encounter with one of them, as the result of which they gathered up quite a sheaf of arrows, but fortunately no one was killed on either side. They discovered an Indian mound with baskets of corn of different colors — yellow, red, and blue — a part of which they took and conscientiously paid for to the owner's entire satisfaction afterward, which was of inestimable value to them the following spring when they came to plant their crops. They found and entered some Indian dwellings, temporarily deserted by their owners, and described the contents. William Bradford, afterward the Governor and historian, got caught by the leg in a deer-snare, but escaped without injury.

But I have not time to follow in detail the story of the three expeditions of the little shallop in those short and sometimes stormy days of late November and the greater part of December. It must suffice to say that a suitable place, in their opinion, being at last discovered, on Monday, December 21st, the shortest day of the year, they sounded Plymouth harbor, "and founde it," as Bradford says, "fitt for shipping; and marched into y<sup>e</sup> land, & found diverse cornfeilds, & litle runing brooks, a place (as they supposed) fitt for situation;



at least it was y<sup>e</sup> best they could find, and y<sup>e</sup> season, & their presente necessitie, made them glad to accepte of it. So they returned to their shipp againe with this news to y<sup>e</sup> rest of their people, which did much comforte their harts." This 21st day of December then, the short winter-solstice day of the year, when the Pilgrims explored Plymouth harbor and determined on the site of their habitation there, is called the Landing Day. It was not, however, till four days later that the *Mayflower* sailed from what is now known as Provincetown to the new harbor; while it was not till eight days later, on December 31st, that by formal vote they determined to make Plymouth harbor their home. Two days after that they set to work, as Bradford says, to "erecte y<sup>e</sup> first house for comone use to receive them and their goods."

I cannot follow in further detail the story of the settlement of the little colony on that bleak coast, in the middle of winter, or of the terrible mortality which, before the following autumn, had exactly halved the little company. With April's coming the settlement of the living by the town brook-side nearly equaled the settlement of the dead hidden away on Cole's Hill. Nor can I trace the subsequent story of the next few years of continued struggle and varying fortunes in the Plymouth colony. No sadder, no prouder, no more pathetic or nobler story is written anywhere in history than the story of the coming and the early experiences of the Leyden Pilgrims to these inhospitable shores. For various reasons,—mainly on account of the relative inferiority of their numbers and the comparative disadvantageousness of their geographical situation,—the Plymouth colony played a comparatively incon-



spicuous part in later New England history, when measured by the Massachusetts Bay colony, which came nine or ten years later and made its central settlement at Boston. The larger numbers and greater commercial advantages of this latter colony left the Plymouth company in a manner side-tracked and out of the line of main New England progress. But the principles of the Pilgrim colony had nevertheless a curious victory over those of the Bay. The Bay settlers were for the most part Puritans, not Separatists;—that is, they wished to purify the Episcopal Church in which they had been brought up, and did not care to separate from it. They did not, most of them at least, intend to separate from it,—only from some of its faults,—when they came over. But being over here, and coming in contact with the leaders of the Separatist Plymouth colony, who had been nine or ten years on the ground, they adopted their principles, and in the organization of the Salem and Charlestown and Watertown Churches accepted their example and subscribed to what was known as the Plymouth Way. This fixed the pattern for all New England, practically, for the next hundred years. A single Episcopal Church was, indeed, organized in Boston in 1686, and a few others slowly followed, here and there. But the current of religious history was set for all New England into Congregational channels, and that current was directed into those channels by the Separatist fathers of Plymouth colony. Though that colony as a political power waned and faded beside the growing strength of the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Haven colonies, as a religious power it stamped its impress on them all; and the Congregational

Churches of New England to-day,—nay the forty-six hundred and eighty-nine Congregational Churches of our whole land, from Plymouth Rock to California's Golden Gate, as given in our last official returns, a number, however, which every month sees increasing,—stand a monument to the principles brought over in the *Mayflower* to Plymouth, rather than to those which came in the *Talbot* to Salem, or the *Arbella* to Boston.

The Scrooby exiles and the Leyden patient sufferers have had their vindication at the hands of impartial history. The Congregationalist polity of our whole land is their memorial. Baptized with the blood of Coppin and Thacker and Penry and Greenwood and Barrowe, its earliest martyrs; consecrated by the faith and sufferings of the twelve years of Holland hardship, and lifted into all the world's view by the heroism of the Plymouth forefathers' desperate enterprise and self-sacrificing sufferings, it abides the hard-won trophy of religious liberty and of the right of the people in spiritual things. Into that liberty we have been born; but those who purchased it for us did it at how great a cost. Shame on any descendant of the Plymouth stock who forgets his father's sacrifice. Let us who have entered into their labors estimate aright our debt of gratitude to their memories. O, wind-swept burial-hill of rocky Plymouth by this December sea, sacredly guard the hallowed dust of those to whom we owe so great a debt! O, living men and women, youth and maidens, forget not I pray you the exiles of Leyden and the storm-tossed voyagers of the *Mayflower* who did so much to make life to you what it is to-day! O, Son of Man, whom this Christmas season celebrates, makes us in our time and place as faithful to conscience

and to Thee as they were who, on the bleak coast of this wild, strange land, stood two hundred and seventy years ago, shivering and homeless, but true to God, to their convictions, and to the Christ who was born for our salvation in the manger at Bethlehem.

## XIII.

THE BREADTH, AND LENGTH, AND DEPTH,  
AND HEIGHT.\*

EPHESIANS III: 17, 18, 19.

*That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*

The most eminent of living theologians of New England has remarked that if Jonathan Edwards had not been the foremost of dogmatic divines he might have been the foremost of imaginative poets. And certainly there are in the midst of Edwards's argumentative pages passages,—sometimes of tender, almost fanciful grace, and sometimes of gloomy and Dantesque grandeur,—which go far to justify this estimate of him. In a similar way we may speak of the apostle Paul. If he had not been the foremost of Biblical logicians he might have been,—nay, we may better say, he was,—the foremost of Biblical rhapsodists. For the truth is he was both. He was at once a great reasoner and a great mystic. A large part of his writing is cast in the moulds of a rigid argumentation; but every little while his fervid imagination and intense

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\* Preached on April 29, 1894.

emotion burst all logical fetters and overflow in strains of poetry, and even of fantasy. He loses sight of the requirements of grammatical correctness. He does not pause to complete his sentences. He goes off from the track of a half-uttered thought, struck by the strong impulse of a new conception suddenly rising upon him. He takes you on the stream of his impassioned feeling into regions where words are too inadequate to express his idea, and stands himself, and leaves you to stand, where he and you can only wonder and adore.

A good illustration of this trait is the passage from which I have taken the text. This whole epistle to the Ephesians is written in a strain of unwonted fervor on Paul's part. It has a great many illustrations of those characteristics of Paul's mind and manner of which I have spoken. But this passage, from the third chapter, beginning with the fourteenth verse, is a quite conspicuous example of the kind. Read it again. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" — see how the thought of God's fatherhood of Jesus Christ sets him off into a declaration of His universal fatherhood in earth and heaven alike — "that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory" — not, observe, the riches of His power or the riches of His wisdom, but the wide, sounding, undefining measure, "the riches of His glory" — whatever that may mean; "to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted" — like a tree — "and grounded" — like a building — "in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth,

and height," — the breadth and length and depth and height of what? He does not distinctly say what. He leaves the clause unfinished. He may mean, at least in part, what he calls the divine "mystery" unknown to the sons of men in other ages that God includes the Gentiles in the plans of grace, of which he had just been speaking in the fifth and sixth verses of the chapter; or he may more probably merge the thought of *that* "mystery" in the still wider one of which he speaks in the ninth and tenth verses, which he declares had from the "beginning of the world been hid in God"; a mystery of the whole creation's relation to Jesus Christ; a mystery which "principalities and powers in heavenly places" were studying into, and whose vast reaches of grace and glory were being illustrated in the history of the ransomed Church. This is what he hints, yet he does not complete the clause; but straightway moves on in his prayer that his Ephesian friends might comprehend the length and breadth and depth and height, and "know the love of Christ" — concerning which love, however, he immediately asseverates that it "passeth knowledge"; that is, if we take the words literally, he prays that they may know the unknowable; and furthermore, as if this were not hyperbole enough, "that ye may be filled" — poor, ignorant, sinful Ephesian disciples might be "filled" — bold, nay, impossible, though the conception be — "be filled with all the fullness of God."

Now, it is very plain that language like this is not to be held to the rigid terms with which you interpret a sum in arithmetic, or a physician's prescription in medicine. Great violence has been done to many passages of Scripture by subjecting them to the hydraulic

pressure of mere logic and grammar. Very considerable edifices of doctrine have been built up, like inverted pyramids, on the small foundation of some one or two proof-texts; and these very possibly wrested from proper connections, or occurring in the midst of some impassioned and poetic bursts of prophecy or of song.

“In sin did my mother conceive me,” for example. How that fervid, imaginative saying of humbled and repentant David has been treated as a grave didactic statement of pre-natal sinfulness, in support of the Augustinian view of original depravity! Augustine’s view may or may not be true; but it is a wresting of Scripture to quote David’s prayer as a proof of it. The wise and right way to deal with such a passage as David’s contrite utterance, or with this magnificent emotional outburst of the apostle whose words we are considering, is to throw ourselves into the current of the emotion to which they attempt to give expression; to yield to the strong impulse which throbs in the writer’s speech, and let him bear us, or rather let the Spirit which speaks through him bear us, whithersoever he will.

If we do so, we shall often find our hearts mightily stirred within us by the fervor of an ancient devotion which kindles an answering emotion in our own breasts; and we shall sometimes be led to even wider conceptions of the manifold wisdom and grace of God than could possibly have been in the mind of psalmist, prophet, or apostle who first spoke the words. This wonderful saying of Paul’s, for example, a small portion of which is our text to-day, if we give ourselves to its leadership, behold to what reaches of apostolic,



and even more than apostolic, conception of God's gracious purposes it leads us on!

"That ye may be able to comprehend the breadth," says Paul. The vision Paul had of God's saving plans for men was indeed a wide one. Not merely had he, more than any one else of his day, discerned how the whole story of God's dealings with Israel,—the experiences of the patriarchs, the legislation of Moses, the sacrificial system of the priesthood, the teachings of psalmists and prophets,—led up to and was fulfilled in Christ; but he discerned first of all the apostolic company, and clearer than any other of them perhaps ever did, that God's plans comprised not Israel alone, but reached over boundaries of other languages and races also. The little hints and suggestions which Isaiah and Amos and some others of the old prophets and singers caught of this truth became in Paul's clear eye a distinct and open vision. He saw it with the distinctness of noonday. Against the advice and remonstrance of his associates on the apostolic board he gave himself to its guidance. He took his life in his hand to promulgate the wider view of salvation for Gentiles also. The "other sheep" not of the Jewish fold he made it his mission to gather. But not only so. Wrapped up, as it were, in a divine contemplation, he saw not only that all men were concerned in the broad manifestations of God's grace to the world, but that the thing was so marvelous as to attract the attention of higher intelligences than man, and that "principalities and powers in heavenly places" were wondering over these manifestations and desiring through them the better to understand the "manifold wisdom of God." The vision was indeed an entrancing one. O



the "breadth"! he exclaimed. "That ye may comprehend the breadth."

Yet it is no irreverence to say that, wide as Paul's view was, it was but narrow compared with that it is our privilege to have. Other races and continents than Paul ever heard of we see are subjects for, and recipients of, the grace which he wondered over as he beheld it reaching outside of Judaism to a few Roman provinces. Lands and peoples sunk out of sight beyond enveloping seas; realms and tribes, of which no conjecture, even, came to minds of voyagers or geographers of old, were included, as we now know, though even an apostle imagined it not then, in the scope of the Gospel of Calvary.

Moreover, the number of the human family is a constantly increasing number. The population of the world is computed to have doubled in the last hundred years. Now, unless we believe in the total loss of all these outlying and once utterly unknown races of the human family, we must believe that He who "tasted death for every man" has had some way of approach to them in their needs; has had some way of making His sacrifice available for many, at least, among them; has gathered His "other sheep," is gathering them still, on broader fields than prophet's eye or apostolic vision ever looked upon. Furthermore, what was that universe, as Paul conceived of it, and as it was alone possible he could conceive of it, which was interested in the "manifold wisdom of God" as illustrated here? It was the heavenly company surrounding this little dot of earth, then thought central and chief of all the creations of God, round which, for its benefit, the sun revolved, the moon trod her nightly circle, and dimmer

lamps twinkled in remoter distances. Such a world might well have its guardian intelligences; angels and ministrants of light might well wait upon its Creator, and concern themselves about His doings here. But to us who only just begin to fathom creation's vastness, who know our world to be, as it were, but a spark among the blazing suns and rolling systems of a space which every added telescopic power to penetrate shows only to be more populous and unfathomable,—to us, I say, what new significance comes in the thought that what our Saviour is doing here will be of interest to other solar systems and their multitudinous revolving spheres, which may, each in its own way, be illustrating some mighty drama of moral government, unlike, indeed, but analogous to ours, and all destined some time to display in modes apostles never dreamed, and which we, even, can only conjecture and surmise, the manifold wisdom and love of God. If, then, the apostle, how much more we, have reason to exclaim, Oh, the breadth! That we may comprehend the breadth of the grace of God, what a prospect and endeavor!

“And the length.” Paul loved to trace the development in history of the revelation of God's grace. He had, in a high degree, what is called the historic sense. If, as some suppose, he wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, we have in that treatise an elaborate setting forth, by his pen, of the long, slow, developing process of the divine purposes in God's education and redemption of men. If he did not write that epistle, we have, nevertheless, in many another letter incontestably his, plentiful indications of this habit of his mind to trace backward to its beginnings, and forward to its end, the long story of Christianity. Read the fifth chapter of

Romans, or the fifteenth of First Corinthians, or the fourth of Galatians, and see how accustomed he was to follow the track of unfolding religious history from Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ, from Christ onward to the resurrection and the consummation in the kingdom of God. It was a grand and awe-enkindling sequence of events. What a line of august personal characters; of striking and momentous historical occurrences; of plain and indicative divine interposals, marked that long, evolving drama! Contemplating the persistency and duration of that purpose which thus reached over generations and epochs, how natural for him to exclaim in admiration and wonder: O the length of God's plans!

But here, again, the revelations of history and the discoveries of science have vastly enlarged our conceptions of the application of such a phrase as the length of the grace of God. No absolute chronology, measuring out the duration of human life upon this world of ours, is deducible from the Bible. The Bible was not written for this purpose. And the attempts which good men have made to shut the record of this earth's story, or of the story of human life upon it, up into the more or less definite period of six thousand years cannot be accounted a success. The revelations of geology, and of ethnology, plainly indicate durations of time and conditions of human life undescribed, and in some cases unsuspected, in the narrative of that part of the story of this world and its inhabitants of which the Bible tells. But how about those undelineated periods of human history of which evidence remains to us in the relics of mound-builders, cave-dwellers, companions of mastodons, and extinct races of animal life;

pre-occupants, some of them it is believed, of northern Europe and America before the great glacial epoch of geologic history? Take up in the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, or in any of a score of museums in Europe, one of those rudely-fashioned stone implements with which one of those cave-dwellers beat the life out of the bear he was killing; broke its bones into manageable morsels to handle; rubbed, perhaps, his firewood into flame; and knocked out, very probably, the brains of some one he accounted an enemy. Who was that far-off wielder of that heavy stone mallet? A very low-down sort of man, certainly, but indubitably a man. But if a man, then a being with some accountabilities; a being with a soul somewhere inside of him; a being with some kind of relations to his Maker; a being with some sort of a hereafter; a being with some possibilities of gracious guidance. And are you going to leave him out of all account because he did not know how to read and write; because he had never heard of Abraham or Moses, or the Bible Society or the Sunday-school? Do you suppose God leaves him out of His account? Forgets him in his nakedness to remember you in your fine clothes? Ah! if He is God, He does no such thing.

“O the generations old,  
Over whom no church-bell tolled;” —

if God is God, He remembers them, and some way fairly and divinely deals with them in procedures of pity and of grace.

Or, look in the other direction. Paul apparently supposed that the “great day of the Lord,” the grand consummation of the kingdom of God, was not very far

off ; might possibly come in the lifetime of living readers of his letters. It is no disparagement of his wisdom, or even of his inspiration, that he was not acquainted with what was really to be the fact, since our Saviour Himself said, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." So that when we see that perhaps more than fifteen centuries longer duration than ever entered into Paul's estimate have already rolled away ; all freighted full with their various experiences in the history of the Church and the lives of individual men ; all bearing minute, comprehensive, general, and particular tokens of providential and gracious dealings of God in the world ; and the same story still stretching onward, we know not how far, we cannot tell how long, before the yet delayed but certain consummation of the divine plan is fulfilled, we are lost in an amazement profounder than Paul's could have been, and can only cry out in an astonishment greater than his, Oh, the length, the measureless length of God's grace among men !

But "the Depth," says the apostle.

In his famous first chapter of his letter to the Romans, Paul paints a lurid picture of the sinfulness of mankind. He sets forth the moral consequences over all the earth of the rejection, by men, of the lights of nature and of conscience. He delineates with graphic and powerful strokes the blindness of mind, and the corruptions of the body, to which such forgetfulness of the "eternal power and Godhead" naturally leads on. It is an awful and repulsive portrayal of the results of that unwillingness to "retain God in their knowledge" which culminates in the "reprobate mind," whose pos-

sessors he describes as "being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." Truly a fearful catalogue of moral delinquencies, and one which requires an amazing downward reach of divine grace to get underneath, in order to lift men out of such a quagmire of sin and uncleanness. Certainly, in contemplating the adequacy of the heavenly provision made to go down so low in the rescue of men, Paul had reason to exclaim, Oh, the depth, the wonderful depth of the grace of God!

But it is observable that the picture Paul here draws is a picture of sin, not against grace, but only against nature. He is speaking of the consequences of rejecting that revelation of Himself which God has made, even in the midst of darkest heathenism, through the creative and providential works of His hands, and in the sentiment or instinct of righteousness which He has lodged even in pagan breasts. Now, it is one of the plainest of moral principles, discovered by reason and inculcated in Scripture, that the degree of wrong in any act is not so much measured by the act itself, as by the light the doer had in the performance of it. Our Saviour sets this principle forth with the utmost distinctness, when he speaks of the beating with "few" or with "many stripes," according as the transgressor knew or did not know with clearness the Master's will. The application of this principle to human action conducts us to the inevitable conclusion that there are

worse transgressors by far than those the apostle tells us of in his epistle to the Romans. It is a deeper and a darker sin to reject the light of revelation than nature's comparatively obscure and trembling ray. To do despite unto the Spirit of grace, and to count the blood of redemption of nothing worth, is a greater transgression than for a child of nature, only, to steal, or murder, or corrupt his body with vice. We are apt to put a relative emphasis on bodily sins, an emphasis which the Bible does not. The Scriptures do, indeed, condemn them, but they condemn still more some spiritual sins which we are apt to pass over with light reproof. Pride, envy, ingratitude, unbelief, insensibility to divine love, carelessness about the provisions of heavenly mercy for the help of men; especially indifference to a Saviour's work and offers in our behalf, how comparatively easy our judgment of these things, when measured by what we call sins of the body. Our Saviour certainly did not judge so. He told certain outwardly upright and respectable citizens and public instructors in Jerusalem, that the publicans and harlots of that city would go into the kingdom of God before them.

So that we who sit in the clear light of the Gospel day; we children of parents whose lives were a witness to the Gospel's saving power; we who are surrounded by accumulating tokens of the truth and the infinite tenderness of the grace of God, rejecting that grace, or being careless about it, need a depth of mercy in our behalf far more patient and profound than many a cannibal father who has eaten his child, or felon who has swung from a gallows-tree. Oh, the depth of divine grace which we need, my hearers! How often and how long have we neglected light, and abused



privilege! Charles Wesley was never what is called a bad man; but under the light of his opportunities and his shortcomings he felt compelled to cry:

“Depth of Mercy, can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?  
I have long withstood His grace  
Long provoked Him to His face  
Would not hearken to His calls;  
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.”

And we, if we understand our own needs, and especially if we humbly hope that those needs have been in some measure supplied by a love of infinite patience and tenderness covering and forgetting all our sins, will surely feel that we have like reason to exclaim, Oh, the depth, the fathomless depth, of the grace of God!

“And the Height,” the “Height,” once more says the Apostle.

To what lofty end does all this manifestation of the love of God toward men lead on? Paul has himself spoken most inspiring and uplifting words on this point. To the Galatian Christians he wrote concerning the purpose of this operation of heavenly grace that its object was to make men “the sons of God.” In his Roman letter he still further elaborated this thought. “And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;” a conception which he yet more perfectly develops in his first Corinthian epistle, when he says of the effect of this divine purpose, “All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours.” Or still more explicitly in the Ephesian letter and in close connection with our text: “But God who is rich in



mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The adoption of men into divine sonship, with vast and inalienable privileges as God's children, and the manifestation through this gracious work of His own character to the universe, this is the end, as the apostle conceives of it, of the amazing uplift of the plan of God. No wonder he cries, Oh, the height !

But it is obvious that in whatever degree our conceptions of the greatness of that Being of whom we are made sons is enlarged, the vastness of that inheritance of which heirship is promised is proportionately increased; and the majesty of that universe to whose powers and intelligences in heavenly places these things are to be revealed is widened and exalted. In the same proportion, also, the wonder rises that God's grace is so high. Yet, in all these points, we have light the apostle did not have. God is not only great, He is greater with every revolving year. His universe widens every hour. Heirship in it; sonship to its Head, is a privilege it never was before.

"The fathers saw not all of Thee."  
 New births are in Thy grace;  
 Thou God of light, to us reveal  
 Thy glory's hiding-place."

That prayer is answering every hour. More than prophets, psalmists, or apostles of old, are we privileged

to see of the length, the breadth, the depth, the height of the grace of God.

And now the single word in conclusion comes : Brethren and sisters, keep this your glorious privilege and calling in mind ! Let it have its proper effect upon you. Live under its inspiration and its uplifting power. Sons and daughters of God Almighty, remember what are the riches of your inheritance in Christ ! Let nothing deprive you of the comfort of its recollection. Suffer nothing lower, more earthly and trivial, to rival in your affections that which, greatest of all possible privileges in reality, should be greatest and most prized in your estimate of it. Let this word of inspired exhortation abide with you, exercising over you its proper stimulating, restraining, uplifting power : Seeing then that ye look for these things, "what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness."

## XIV.

## THE SEPULCHRE IN THE GARDEN.\*

JOHN XIX : 41.

*“Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden,  
and in the garden a new sepulchre.”*

I cannot believe it was mere fidelity to history which led John to record that the place of our Saviour's crucifixion was in the immediate vicinity of a garden, or that it was in a garden that He was buried. We can none of us forget that more than one of the great events of human sin and human redemption, of which the burial of Christ was but a part, occurred in a similar spot.

Biblical history commences in a garden. The opening chapter of all this world's experience narrates the bliss and beauty of Eden. The Scripture record of God's dealings with men preserves for us the memory of a morning hour of human life spent amid the delights of a rural paradise. But a garden is not the scene of human history's happy commencement alone. It is the scene, also, of human nature's fatal temptation and fall. It was in a garden that sin achieved its first victory over our race, and that death received its first

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\* Written in 1863, rewritten in 1889, and preached on Easter Sunday of that year.

power. It is to a primeval pleasure-ground, a place of beauty and of joy,—of which every garden is a kind of faded memorial,—that we look back to see where guilt entered and all our woe.

There is, therefore, a kind of fitness, which we cannot think undesigned, in the fact that it is to a similar spot, also, that we look back for the beginning of the reversal of all this. Where sin and death gained their great victory, there, too, they suffered their great defeat. It was in a garden that Adam was tempted and fell. It was in Gethsemane that Christ agonized and overcame. It was in Eden that Adam received the sentence: "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return." It was in a garden on the hillside of Calvary that the second Adam rose from the grave "seeing no corruption." Adam, the first opener of the tomb, dug the burial place of a race in the garden soil of Paradise: Christ, the "first fruits" of those who shall forever live, fell to the ground like a grain of wheat and was laid in a garden sepulchre. The happiest, saddest, mightiest scenes of human story are thus disclosed as having occurred in that spot which is to men a kind of symbol of what is most beautiful and blest,—a garden.

The narrative which John gives of the crucifixion of his Master introduces us to the garden-grounds of Joseph of Arimathea. We know nothing of this man, save what we learn from the few facts recorded of him in connection with the burial of Christ. Where he had met Christ; whether he was, as seems probable, one of the Sanhedrin before whom our Lord was brought; how far he had previously shown an interest in the Saviour's person or teachings,—these are questions there are no certain means for deciding. About

all that can be definitely affirmed is that he was rich, and that he stood in some official relation to the government. This wealthy and influential man, availing himself of his privilege as a person of station, gained permission from Pilate to take down the body of Christ from the cross and to deposit it in a tomb in his garden, which lay in the immediate vicinity of the place of crucifixion.

This garden of Joseph's we may reasonably suppose partook of the characteristic features of such spots among the Jews. Jewish gardens were often considerably remote from their possessors' dwelling-places. They were not generally, as ours are, connected with their owners' houses, but were more frequently outside of the city walls, on some sunny hillside, or in some spring-moistened valley. Such a spot the rich counsellor possessed on the gentle acclivity of a hill lying a little to the northwest of Jerusalem. It was, probably, after the usual Hebrew custom, a place made beautiful by assiduous culture and care. To it, we may imagine, Joseph and his household were wont to go, — as is still the manner in Oriental towns, — in the morning hours, before the sun had left the top of Olivet, or in the softer light of setting day. It was the household's pleasure-ground. It was a place set apart for happiness. There age might lay aside its years, and manhood forget its cares, and childhood rejoice as on its native soil. The very end for which its walls were built, its alleys graded, its borders set with fruit trees and with flowers, was happiness. For business, the counsellor could haunt the "dusky purlieus of the law" in some Temple court or Jerusalem street : even for the routine of life's common satisfactions a home within the city's

walls would do ; but for the free unbending of the heart in its gayer moments, when it cast off business and routine, the rich man had hedged about a garden — the very name a sound of pleasure.

But for a place thus set apart for joy the spot had one feature apparently inharmonious. In Joseph's garden there was a sepulchre. Close by where flowers bloomed and ripening figs and apricots blushed ; perhaps even clambered over by the grape and festooned with its purpling clusters, rose the somber doorway of a tomb. Whether built by the rich man in anticipation of a need whereof possibly the slow advancing illness of some member of his household had forewarned him, or raised only in view of the grim certainty which lies before every man of a want some time to be experienced which only a hiding-place for the tenantless body can satisfy, there it stood, in the spot dedicated to pleasure, a reminder of the hour which puts a period to earthly joy, a silent but eloquent monitor of mortality. And though it is said that it was a "new" sepulchre "wherein was never man yet laid," yet a man of Joseph's years could not have looked upon it without being reminded, if not of friends laid there to rest, yet of them as laid somewhere, gathered in other graves, hidden from him by doors as massy and darkness as silent as this "new sepulchre's." To him, therefore, and his household, there was always in the midst of the place devoted to happiness a memento of sorrow. Bright as sun could shine, gay as flowers could blush, there was, — and it could not be forgotten, — the sepulchre.

But what is thus told us of Joseph and his sepulchre is not so strange after all. The like is true of almost

every man. In almost all gardens there is a sepulchre. Let life go with us gently as it may, it is not very long generally before amid the very scene of our joy there is some kind of a tomb. Ever since that day in the first garden when man took of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," evil has mingled with all our good. It was a sad choice for his posterity which the first father of our race made for us; but it was made, and we can none of us escape the inheritance to which we are born. Henceforth there was for man a bitter in every sweet, a doubt in every hope, a shadow over every light. Henceforth perfect happiness or peace were found nowhere. In every "garden" came a "sepulchre."

These sepulchres in men's gardens are, however, very diverse in character. In some lives, the sepulchre is some form of bodily infirmity. The man is rich, respected, surrounded by friends, but, with all these things, lacks the common boon of health. And so the coarse crust is sweeter to the day-laborer than the dainties of every clime to him, and down is harsher under his restless head than the bare floor to one who sweeps the streets. In other lives, the sepulchre is some form of inward unhappiness; some memory of sin or error in the past; some mischance, bringing unjust suspicion on one's good name; some anxiety of the present or dread of the future, is like a tomb in the garden, a dark spot in all the life.

Or that which imparts the sombre hue to existence may be the character of a child or of a companion. This is the discordant or tragic note in the household joy. Or it may be a veritable sepulchre which is the sad spot in our lives. Into the happiest of homes the grim messenger who builds such sepulchres enters. It

is not absolutely true as our Longfellow says, but it comes pretty near being true —

“There is no flock, however watched and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there;  
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,  
But has its vacant chair.”

The grave may be but a span long, only big enough to hide a curly head and dimpled feet, or it may be wide enough for manhood with hoary hairs to rest in ; but, soon or late, some such are found in all the gardens of our lives.

And so many and so hidden, oftentimes, from the eyes of others are these sepulchres in the garden, that a man must be either very bold or very foolish who dares to covet another's lot. It is not always the outward aspect of a life which bespeaks it truly. It may seem an unusually happy life, very honorable, very enviable, very full of satisfactions ; but its possessor might unfold another story about it. While you stand admiring, and wishing such a lot your own, he whom you look upon may be almost dying with some unsuspected misery, and, if he would, could tell you a tale which would warn you from ever envying any man again till you have seen the sepulchre in his garden.

When the literary public of Great Britain, about the year 1820, were alternately laughing and crying over the mingled wit and pathos of the essays of Elia, then publishing by an anonymous writer, little did the curious public conjecture that those gems of tenderness and of mirth came forth from the closet of an over-tasked East-India-House clerk, whose chief object in life was to watch over and keep a home for a maniac



sister,— a sister who had killed their common mother with her own hand, and who was liable at any moment to burst out in a similar assault against her brother and only friend.

Few were they who rightly understood, during the closing years of Edmund Burke, how much of the softened splendor, the sweet sad majesty of his later eloquence, was the fruit of the affliction which robbed England's stateliest orator of his only son, and hid the great man's heart in that grave from which ambition or applause could never tempt it again.

Many of the jokes and repartees of Rev. Dr. Strong, the witty and able pastor of this church, who died seventy-three years ago, are still current among the stories of this Hartford town. But nothing which I have ever heard of him ever let me so much into his heart as the inquiry he made at the time of the building of the bridge across the river to the East Hartford side, as to just where the bridge was located. Why did he not go and see, do you ask? Because on one September evening, his eighteen year old boy, just graduated from Yale College, returning from a journey, fell from the ferry-boat and was brought, some time in the night, a lifeless body to the father's house, just across this street opposite, and never after that day, though years had gone, had the father been able to visit that section of the town which came within sight of that fatal spot.

In having a sad spot in it, Joseph's pleasure-ground was not, therefore, an exceptional one. The incongruous feature is not unusual, after all. A sepulchre in the garden is only what is very common in men's lives.

But it is time to turn to another aspect of this matter of the sepulchre in Joseph's garden. At first it seemed strange to find it there. It was an unexpected fellowship,—flowers and the grave, a pleasure-ground and a tomb; but a little reflection showed that the same fellowship is in almost all lives. We are, therefore, prepared, perhaps, to discover with less surprise that the sepulchre in Joseph's garden was the best thing there was in it. The happiest spot in the whole ground was just that where was the tomb. Joseph found it so. It was that spot which did more for him than all the rest.

Joseph had come, spring after spring, to see the mystery of the awakening soil; he had beheld the rising of the lily from the mould, and the bursting of the cerements wrapped about the buds on every bough. But now it was the place of death which was to quicken; the spot set apart for human dust which was to stir with a more wondrous rising again than ever his garden knew. A crucified man had been laid three days before in the tomb of the generous Arimathean. The new sepulchre had its occupant. No longer a monitor of mortality to be experienced, it was an in-folder of death realized. Doubtless, something of a deeper shadow crept over the garden for Joseph and his household, now that the tomb had its inhabitant. If, on that Friday evening, after the crucified man had been laid in the new sepulchre, we may imagine the family to have visited their garden-ground, we can well believe, that though on that 9th of April, the tokens of a Palestine springtime must have been visible everywhere in the enclosure, still the suggestions of the place must have been to them of death, more than of

life ; dissolution, more than rising again. The sepulchre never could have seemed so prominent in the garden before. Never could it have appeared so incongruous with the spot.

But on the Sunday afternoon following? On any day subsequent to that third morning afterward, when two angels sitting in the tomb, said: "He is not here, but is risen"? What was the place now to Joseph and his household? Words cannot tell the alteration of it. Immeasurable the change for Joseph and all his, which had come over their pleasure-ground. For him and them what a book of revelation had been opened there! To what a new and deeper range of emotion did the spot now minister! Problems had been there answered over which their hearts and all the world's hearts had ached in vain. The counsellor had prepared the place to lend life a keener zest; the event which had now occurred spoke not of life but of immortality. He had been wont to go thither to lay aside something of this world's fret and weariness; when now he went, it was to behold a spot on which had been disclosed another world's reality and blessedness. The sepulchre had been once a reminder, filling him with pensive thoughts of the hour when pleasure and business should alike be over; it spoke to him now of a time, when, in a better world, every noble activity should be resumed. He may have paused sometimes, in days gone by, beside the tomb he had built for his last sleep, and have asked himself, "What assurance have I that I shall not sleep here forever?" But, after that Sunday morning, one imagines his step must have quickened as he came near the spot, where, for him and for all men, resurrection and life eternal had been brought to

light. No other nook of his garden had a lesson like that. The sepulchre had become the garden's joy. The bed of tulips and lilies was not so beautiful as the stony niche in which the Son of Man was laid, but from which he came forth, the "first-fruits" of all who sleep.

And as Joseph came, at last, to need the shelter of the sepulchre's roof, and the protection of its close-shut doors, one thinks his aged limbs composed themselves to a willing rest, and all his mortal flesh rejoiced to lie down in a spot where He who had "abolished death" and conquered the grave had lain before him. Surely of all the garden's precincts that was now the best. It was the hill of hope. It was the haunt of peace. It was a spot making happier every day of this life, with a gladness radiating from the life to come.

Not unlike this is it oftentimes with the sepulchres in other men's gardens. The careful observer of God's dealings with men sees, frequently, that these places of life's sorrow become the centers of life's best joy. These words written of great, blind Milton,—they might almost have been written by him,—well express the not uncommon office of the afflictions of our days :

" I am old and blind ;  
Men point at me as smitten by God's frown ;  
Afflicted and deserted of my kind,  
Yet I am not cast down.

I am weak, yet strong,  
I murmur not that I no longer see ;  
Poor, old and helpless, I the more belong,  
Father supreme, to Thee !

Thy glorious face  
Is leaning toward me, and its holy light  
Shines in upon my dwelling place,  
And there is no more night.

On my bended knee  
I recognize thy purpose clearly shown —  
My vision hast thou dimmed that I may see  
Thyself alone."

So, under the dark shadow of affliction, many another soul than Milton's enters into truer communion with itself than it ever had before. It strikes a juster balance between life's seemings and life's substances. It learns how empty and unimportant are many of the objects, which, in the untroubled hours of existence, appeared of great concern. It learns the great lesson, that a garden of pleasure is not all a man wants; he wants a resurrection-spot for his soul. He wants a place this side the grave where the things of the other side may be seen; where they may in a manner come forward into the present, and exert the influence which rightfully belongs to them. He wants a solemn reminder that this life is but a small fraction of his being; this world ministers but to the smallest of his needs; and that the great wants as well as the great destinies of the soul are elsewhere. These are facts which are oftener effectually taught us by the sepulchres in our gardens than by all the rest of our lives; and so they become the best part of life to us. No other part does so much for us; no other gives instructions so needed and so profound. We cannot do without the burial-places in our gardens. They give us,—what without them we are slow to find,—a place to unrobe ourselves of earth's vanities, and put on the

garments becoming heirs of immortality. It is not the tulip-ground and the summer-house in our days which generally give this ; it is the bereavement and the sorrow.

Are there those of you, my hearers, in whose gardens has never yet been built any kind of sepulchre ? I do not know whether to rejoice or grieve for you. It may be you are learning all the lessons such a spot is designed to teach in some other way. It may be you are living so humble and faithful a Christian life that God sees you do not need trouble. If it be so, the unbroken flow of happiness in your life is an occasion for gladness. Happy the man who runs so unfalteringly up the shining way that he needs no spurs of earthly trial to urge him on ! But if this is not the case ? Then I do not know whether it would be true kindness to congratulate you that your life has in no considerable sorrow, your garden no tomb. There is one word of God, and a very gentle word it is too, which might trouble such a man almost more than any other word beside : " Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." And as such a person perceives the comparative freedom from the heavenly chastisement which marks his days, and discerns, too, that there is nothing in his superior fidelity to the Lord's service which goes any way toward lighting up the mysterious problem why it is that he is exempt, he may well tremble between these two fears ; the fear that he is one whom the Lord loveth not, or the fear of those days, which, so surely as he is beloved, will see the sepulchre in his garden somewise built.

But many of you,—nay, most of you, my friends,

here to-day,—know full well what it is to have a sepulchre in the garden of your lives. You know the shadow that it sheds over all the pleasant alleys and the bordered paths. You need not be told how it changes the place for you into something other than it was. So it did for Joseph. The tenanted sepulchre darkened all the ground.

But friends, there is another aspect of this matter. Joseph found another. This Easter Sunday is a memorial of it. Not a spot in all the enclosure brought him so enduring joy as the very place which he had builded for sorrow. And the sepulchre in your garden may do the same for you. It may be a resurrection-spot for your soul. Out of the sorrow which wraps you round, you may rise into a purer and serener day. The rolling of the “great stone” to the door may mark the finishing and hiding-away of one portion of your Christian life. And the rolling of that stone away on the third morning may be the commencement of a new and more consecrated life. And, if this be the case, then the sepulchre spot in your days will be the most blessed of all. Its joy will reach farther, shine clearer, endure longer, than any belonging to the hours when your garden knew no tomb.

Using your sorrow aright it may teach you, as it has taught many, how to say:—

“O deem not they are blest alone  
Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep;  
For God, who pities man, hath shown  
A blessing for the eyes that weep.”



## XV.

## THE MANY GATES.\*

REVELATION XXI: 13.

*On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.*

The Scripture story begins in a garden and ends in a metropolis. It is among the green bowers of Eden that it commences; it is within the shining walls of the crowded "City of God" that it terminates. Two happy, sinless, unclothed dwellers amid the vines and flowers and trees and streams of Paradise, are the first human beings of whom it tells us; but it shows us, before its record closes, a company "which no man can number," "clad in white," and thronging the golden streets of the "New Jerusalem."

Across the wide space from Genesis to the Apocalypse, Scripture conducts us in a devious and changeful pathway. Sometimes the narrative flows forward clear, consecutive; marked by dates which we can calculate and names with which we are familiar. But sometimes, also, there are great gaps and vacant spaces in the story. It begins again, but does not seem to begin just where it left off. Unrecorded intervals, undetailed events, unremembered actors, must have

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\* Written in 1875.



intervened, unnoticed in the meager outline of Biblical chronicle. Yet, in spite of all imperfection of detail, it is impossible not to recognize a purpose and a progress. The narrative is fragmentary, it is true, but is a narrative. The story is of something beginning, growing, perfecting, consummating, after a definite and undefeated plan. And that something is Humanity. It is the history of Man, through the dealings of God with him, of which the Bible is the chronicle.

The passage of which our text is a part brings before us one of the latest scenes of this wonderful story. It is a delineation of Humanity's perfected state. The condition of the redeemed and glorified is set forth under the emblem of a city,—“the City of God,” for which all previous conditions of man's experience have been preparing him, and in the complex and perfect realization of which he will find his ultimate felicity. For we must not forget, my hearers, that though man's primitive and innocent condition is set forth in the idyllic story of Eden with its bowers and solitudes, his redeemed and perfected state is represented as one of companionship and exalted society. There is a “City” of God. The redeemed are not to be set apart from one another in any solitary paradise, however beautiful. They are, rather, to be coördinated into that intimate and wide-reaching relation to one another, of which the complex and elaborately developed life of a city stands, to us, as the completest type. True enough, indeed, it is, that the idea of a city such as has been realized by man on earth contains much incompatible with perfectness. There are sights and sounds which offend the delicate sense. There are woes and crimes and squalors which pain the sensitive heart.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that even in our poor conceptions, colored necessarily by our often sad experience, a great and beautiful city abides our highest type of matured and perfected society ;—a condition of human existence wherein the greatest number of welfares can best be secured ; the tastes of most easiest gratified ; the largest privileges most readily attained ; most various activities afforded amplest room.

Now, it is this conception of a city,—a city glorious, innocent, healthful, perfect, a “City of God,”—which the Scriptures employ to symbolize to us the final condition of redeemed Humanity. Hints of this conception are dropped all through the Scriptures, even in their older portions. Jerusalem the “City of the Great King” stood an emblem of it to every devout Israelite of old. When he uttered his prayer, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?” his thoughts looked beyond that City of David to the City of David’s King. When Zechariah prophesied, “And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof,” the restored earthly Jerusalem in which he conceived that pleasant sight was also a figure of Jerusalem to come.

But many and striking as are these intimations in the Old Testament, they are still more numerous and explicit in the New. Harmonious with them, nay, incompatible with any interpretation beside, are those words of Christ, “In My Father’s house are many mansions.” “Many,” various, adapted, numerous, as are the dwellers there. “No continuing city” here, “but we seek one to come,”—that is the delineation, by the writer to the Hebrews, of the very purpose in life

which dominated the Christians to whom he wrote. Such, he says, was the faith of the fathers, too. They "looked for a city which hath foundations"; and they looked not in vain. Their fidelity had its reward: — "God is not ashamed to be called their God," he says, "And He hath prepared for them a city." This is not the portion of the fathers of Old Testament history alone. It is that of all the faithful as well. To all such, wherever they are, he says: "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."

Still, undoubtedly frequent and plain as are these references to a "City" as the type of the ultimate state of redeemed Humanity, it is to the Apocalypse that it is reserved most elaborately to delineate and vividly to emphasize this conception. And how vividly and elaborately it is done! This whole twenty-first chapter of Revelation, opulent and magnificent in its imagery and language above almost any passage of Scripture beside, is nothing but a description of this City of God. And it is a description which does not content itself with general phrases. It deals with particulars and minute details. How the language labors to bring its glory before us! There is not a "City" only,—but a "great City"; a "holy City"; a City "lying foursquare," vast, commodious, magnificent. There is not "a wall" only,—emblem to the ancient mind of security and defense,—but a wall "great and high," towering upward a "hundred and forty and four cubits," and built, tier on tier, on foundations of most precious stones. There are "gates," but not three or four. "Twelve" of them are there, and each gate

“one pearl.” Streets are there, but they are paved with “gold.” “Light” is there, but it is a glorious light which no sunset ever dims. Inhabitants are there, but thousands do not number them,—“nations,” saved, gather in it, and “kings” “bring their glory and honor into it.” Pure and salubrious, too, is that City, for “there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defleth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie.”

But now, in the midst of this glowing symbolic delineation, we find a phrase interposed which possibly we may have passed over almost unnoticed, but which, rightly considered, is, I think, full of suggestiveness. From the general consideration of the characteristics of the heavenly City I shall turn your attention, therefore, to this special particular. You will find it in the text: “On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.” We have noticed already that there are gates,—many of them; many and splendid in their pearly radiance. But why this mention of the variousness of their location? Why this careful particularization that they look northward and southward and eastward and westward, and open on their golden hinges to every point of the compass? Perhaps some suggestions lie only half hidden here worth our more careful considering.

One such which I will mention is a suggestion as to the variousness of men’s manner of approach to the heavenly City. The “gates” open in all directions because an almost infinite variety of travelers, journeying from most dissimilar regions, are to be gathered there. Said our Saviour to His disciples, whose narrow

Jewish conceptions of the possibilities of salvation for any beside Abraham's offspring needed to be widened, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." The Gospel He proclaimed was not for one nation only, but for the world. And so, too, the New Jerusalem to which that Gospel points the way must be accessible to men of all languages and lands. The gates of it, which we are told are never "shut," open northward and southward and eastward and westward, for out of all regions of the inhabited earth some are continually journeying thither. They come from polar snows, and they come from equatorial plains. They wear every garb the sun in all his circuit ever shines upon. They draw nigh out of countries the most opposite; out of climates the most contrasted; out of languages the most contrarious.

But it is not this geographical variousness of approach to the New Jerusalem alone which the four-fold aspect of the heavenly gates suggests to us. There is a moral variousness still greater than any geographical one. The people who gather are gathered not only out of unlike regions, but out of unlike faiths, ideas, habits, experiences. Those must needs be, in many respects, very different pathways of approach, intellectually and morally, which are traversed to the heavenly City by one who comes thither out of African ignorance, out of Oriental mysticism, out of Indian savagery, and out of European refinement. That Gospel must be an infinitely adaptable one which can adjust itself to the innumerably diverse conceptions and wants of men so dissimilar as the Caucasian in his culture and the Mongolian in his backwardness. And to gather men so unlike as these, and a hundred other

types as distinct and opposite, in one heavenly home, there needs must be a vast variety of approach. The gates are not too many, nor do they look in too many ways.

Nor are they too numerous if we consider only the variousness of men's method of approach, even in the same land and in the very midst of a Christian community. How unlike, after all, are the dwellers who live door to door in a city like this, or sit side by side in this sanctuary. What diverse dispositions, inclinations, experiences, characters. How dissimilar are the motives which constantly actuate them; the arguments which are likely to have weight with them; the moral actions they perform! And in leading men and women so variously constituted to the heavenly Jerusalem the Spirit of God conducts them in most diverse ways. Here is one who arrives thither through the throes and agonies of an experience as stormy as that of Luther or of Paul. He is struck down by a conviction of sin heavy as that which smote the great Apostle from his charger on his bloody errand to Damascus. Here is another whose Christian experience is like that of Fénelon or John. Almost natural it seemed for this man, when he heard the words, "Behold the Lamb of God!" to turn and follow Him. Here are those on whom in their journey Zionward the sun always seems to smile. Their worldly business prospers; their families walk unbroken by their side; health remains steadfast, and temptations appear never to assail. Others come, but it is always under a stormy sky. Adversity breaks their strength. They walk among graves. They almost reckon their progress by the tombstones\* of those they love. More and more alone as they go

forward ; heavier and heavier weighted with suffering and with care, they arrive at last spent and buffeted, like a shipwrecked sailor smitten by a thousand seas, stripped and exhausted at the heavenly refuge. Ah ! the gates are not too many, even for those who are to go in from this congregation ! Well is it that they open northward and eastward and southward and westward ; for various indeed are men's methods of approach.

Another suggestion of this opposite-looking frontage of the heavenly gates is the unexpectedness of the arrival of many there. As many of the travelers to the City were on their way thither they often seemed to be journeying in different directions. Their pathways sometimes ran not parallel, but crosswise and even in contrary courses, according as each was led by the good Spirit which guided him to one or another of the opposite gates. And it would not be strange if, while they thus crossed and traversed one another's way, doubt should arise and even controversy as to the probability of one another's arrival.

And this possibility of a misunderstanding and dispute we know has arisen. We know true pilgrims heavenward have often fallen out by the way. They have impeached one another's chance of entrance. They have denied that the road in which some of their fellow travelers were earnestly going led there at all. They have insisted that the only entrance was the particular gate that they were going through. How bitter and melancholy have been the controversies of those who have all been going heavenward ! Sometimes the road insisted on has been the road of a particular church organization. Only members of that special fellowship could hope to have any admission to



the New Jerusalem. Salvation out of that church was impossible. Sometimes the prescribed pathway has been a particular form of some Christian ordinance. A pilgrim to Zion must, for example, be perfectly immersed, or his title to a true baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, would be unfavorably scrutinized at the heavenly gate. Sometimes a narrow and local type of Christian experience has been regarded as the only road; as when one section of our New England theologians taught the doctrine that the only valid evidence of a probability of being saved was a willingness to be lost.

How reassuring, in view of an almost interminable catalogue of controversies like these, to remember the many and the opposite-looking gates of the heavenly City! How comforting to know that not one door, but many doors lead thither!

What a suggestion this affords of the surprises which will await those who finally enter: the unexpectedness to multitudes of the arrival of multitudes beside. Coming in through their different gates, and meeting on the golden-floored space before the central throne, how will they in a manner wonder at one another as being alike there! Godly Romanists who on earth would have piously burned equally godly Protestants, greeting one another in that common home! Arminians and Calvinists, Quakers and Presbyterians, Puritans and the Anglicans who drove them out, surely something like a smile will be on some of their faces, remembering the arguments against one another's admission which they had sometimes used! Toplady and Wesley,—how they fought in their earthly days! But they will both be there. Erasmus and Luther,—



what bitter words the eager reformer uttered of his scholastic and temporizing compeer. Yet Erasmus did a good work, and we trust has entered into a good reward. Calvin and Servetus, — Calvin conscientiously furthered that trial which ended in burning Servetus alive. But yet, notwithstanding that I am myself a Calvinist, and fully believe that in the doctrinal warfare he was waging Calvin was in the right, I still see no sufficient reason to doubt that when the consumed body of the restless, dogmatic, imprudent Servetus was reduced to ashes there was one Christian less in the world, or that up from those poor charred relics of violence the resurrection morning will bring another glorified form to meet Calvin's in the New Jerusalem.

Nay, these surprises will perhaps be wider still in their reach. Out of pagan lands, where tidings of the Gospel never went, may come sheep of the true fold, led by ways we know not, and spiritually prepared to greet the true Light of Life whenever it should arise. Saved, not indeed without Christ; but saved through a working of the Divine Spirit fitting them to the efficacies of an atonement as yet unknown.

And, — perhaps still harder for us to admit, — there will be surprises from among ourselves. We shall, if we ourselves ever enter that City, be astonished to meet some whom we never expected to see there. Men whose type of religious life we discredited because we did not understand it. Some whom we denounced, perhaps, because they followed not with us, but who followed God through some one of the City's many doors; astonished themselves, perhaps, to find themselves within.

Surprises, too, doubtless, there will be of another

kind. Unexpected vacancies of places we thought certain to be filled. People looked for, but not found. Men who professed the Gospel, but did not practice the Gospel; who said, "Lord, Lord," but never came within the gate.

A further suggestion of this many-doored approach to the New Jerusalem of heaven is the moral unity there is,—notwithstanding much outward variousness,—in all true pilgrims Zionward. There is, as has been plainly indicated, a great deal of superficial dissimilarity in men's method of approach to the heavenly City. Still, the getting there is no accident. It is not a mere matter of happen so. Men do not stumble into heaven by chance. They do sometimes fall, unconsidering, on bits of earthly good fortune,—or what they call so,—into property or reputation or office. But they do not get into heaven in that way. There are, underneath whatever variousness of detail, certain unchangeable identities which mark alike the procedures and the characters of all those who ever arrive there. There are certain distinct moral traits which belong to them; a temper of the spirit, a tone of the feelings, an aim of the life, which appertains to every one. So it has been always in the journeyers Zionward. The eleven men of the Apostolic Company were most dissimilar men, yet whoever in all Jerusalem failed to see that they belonged together? The great guides of Christian history, how diverse they have been! Language has no terms of discrimination which are not all needed to set forth the unlikeness in occupation, speech, and taste, of the leaders of the grand pilgrim companies of every land and age.

Anthony lives a hermit in the desert. Athanasius

sways the decisions of the Nicene Council and holds the turbulent bishopric of Alexandria. Ulfilas goes a missionary to the Goths and invents an alphabet to give them the Bible. Columba carries the Gospel to Scotland. Bernhard and Francis and Thomas Aquinas each labors in his several way to imitate the life of Christ and to set forth His truth to men. Arnold of Brescia and John Huss try to purify a corrupted Church and are burned for their efforts. Luther, more successful, enters into their labors, and a Reformation comes. Laboring in it are men as wide apart in character and history as Cranmer and Calvin and Melanchthon and Zwingli. Rough John Knox follows in this line, and gentle Richard Hooker also. And so the bright succession runs, down through Pascal and Milton and Butler and Fénelon and Robinson and Wesley to Edwards and Payson of our own land and day.

Now here, surely, are great distinctions. But the unity is greater than the distinctions. So in the Jerusalem pilgrims it is ever. Unity is a matter of the heart; and it lives even against the actions of the hand.

And therefore there are certain moral traits which make the heavenly journeyers really one. They are men who while living in the present state are sedulously cultivating the characteristic qualities of the life which is to come. They are men who, going up and down in this earthly scene, garner up with infinite relish and care whatever has the likeness of the City to which they are going. Are purity, righteousness, benevolence, piety, traits of that heavenly home? These are the things they hunger for here. Do the

inhabitants of the New Jerusalem abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good? So do they. Are the dwellers within the City's walls loyal to the City's King, and grateful above words to Him who purchased their entrance there by His sufferings? So are these grateful and loyal also. Do the inhabitants of that City count it their highest privilege to be employed in their Lord's service? These, too, living here, are eager to serve Him also, and attentive to His commands. O! there is no mystery about their getting into the City! Their faces have been looking that way a great while. They have made it a hope and a purpose to be there. Repentant, humble, obedient, trusting, they are now preparing for a heavenly habitation.

I mention as a final suggestion of the four-fronted gateways of the heavenly City, the amplitude of entrance offered to all who will make the effort to enter.

"Twelve gates"—facing, some of them, every quarter where men can dwell. "Twelve gates"—looking off into all the regions where sinning humanity can wander; and always, from every place where any repenting one "comes to himself," and longs to go to his Father's house, a straight way thither and an open door. None necessarily excluded! None shut out for want of entrance-way provided! Doors many enough, and wide enough, and adjacent enough for all. And do not, my dear hearers, in the acknowledgment of this general amplitude of the entrance-way provided, forget your own case. A way opens over against each one of you. A way leads just from where you stand intellectually, morally, socially, experimentally, right into the City's central square.

Ah! my hearers, are you all entering? Are your faces set toward that City as your home? Do you bear the marks of pilgrims Zionward? Are you living so that God is "not ashamed to be called" your "God"; so that he cannot do otherwise than be "preparing for you a city"?

Numbered, or yet unnumbered, of the pilgrim fellowship, walk henceforward only in the heavenly pathway. Set your faces Zionward! So living we shall enter where He is. So living some one of the City's gates will open to us. Suddenly, or on slow hinges, long-awaited, turning, it will open a way for us into the City of God, in the Light of the Lamb.

In this faith let us labor and wait.

## XVI.

## CHRIST THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN.\*

REVELATION XXI: 23.

*And the Lamb is the Light thereof.*

It is useless for us to attempt to read this twenty-first chapter of the Revelation, with the eye of the map-making geographer or of the date-fixing chronologist. The Bible is a very sober book, but it takes us sometimes in tremendous flights, and lands us in regions where our quadrants and compasses are of little service. This passage before us is an example. No one need try to read it who insists on taking his surveyor's chain along with him; or who undertakes to settle the period of every event by the Gregorian calendar.

For the strong wing of Inspiration in this passage beats an atmosphere we have none of us ever yet breathed. It bears us into realms no eye of man has yet looked upon. It takes us beyond time, as time is reckoned in these earthly years: beyond death, beyond the resurrection, beyond the judgment. "The old heavens," to which we have looked up, as the very emblem of steadfastness, and the old earth on which we have walked and built, are passed away;

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\* Written in 1882.

and the great rolling "sea" across which have gone the navies of commerce and of war, is "no more." There is a "new heaven and a new earth," but it must be marvelously different from this; for there is "no night there"; and the inhabitants "hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." There is "a City" there; but it is a City where no one dies; where no one pines in pain; where crying is unknown.

Marvelous too, unlike anything we have beheld, is that City's aspect. The stones we gather here to wear in necklace and ring,—jewels of brilliance and rarity,—are that City's foundation walls. The pearl we use as costly mounting for ornaments of luxury is the fabric of its twelve-fold gates. The gold we hoard as the symbol of value, or carefully work into objects of most coveted art, is the very pavement of its streets.

Obviously we have got out of the region of broker's-bonds, and land-speculator's measurements, and funeral processions, and sick-beds and alms-houses and police regulations, and of about everything with which we are familiar. The sober volume of our devotions is almost delirious in its rhapsodies. We are utterly at a loss to run the line between what we call "reality" and "unreality," the literal and the emblematic, here. To say that all this vision of orient streets and opalescent walls, and sunless skies, and days without night, is actual matter-of-fact description, may, perhaps, be absurdity; but to say that it is symbol and metaphor only, may be absurdity no less. The literalistic spirit which goes through these pages in the temper of an appraiser of an estate or auctioneer of a choice lot of jewelry, may be, after all, very little

more out of the way than the spirit which says: "Why this is figure and image, and nothing more!" I'd as soon take my chances of truth and of happiness, too, with the man who expects to drink from a literal "river" "proceeding out of the throne of God," and to eat of the fruit of a literal "tree of life" growing upon its banks; as to side with the so-called spiritualizing interpreter who sublimates the "City of God" into the conception of some bodiless and vaporlike society of incorporeal beings; or who makes the "wiping away of tears from the eyes," and the "tabernacling of God with men," only a condition of the soul.

And so of this vivid and wonderful phrase of our text — telling of the temple of the New Jerusalem, unto which the nations of the saved shall gather, — "the Lamb is the light thereof." I do not dare to say that is symbol and type alone. I read in those words, "the glory of God did lighten it," an obvious reference, not to the abstract truth that God is glorious everywhere, but to "the glory," the distinctive glory, the *Shechinah* of His visible presence, when the Temple on Zion's Hill was flooded and ablaze with the light of His entrance there. I do not know, nor does any one know, but that in the New Jerusalem there may shine and burn before all gazing eyes, a like symbol of the Ineffable Presence; and that this may be what is expressed, or one of the things which is expressed, when it is said: "And the Lamb is the light thereof."

It will be seen, therefore, that I have no disposition to deny or even to diminish whatever of literal significance may be set before us in this phrase:



“And the Lamb is the light thereof,” if,—instead of attempting any further to delineate what is confessedly so entirely a matter of Revelation alone,—I turn your attention now to a moral truthfulness of this Scripture phrase, which is, in any aspect of it, of exceeding preciousness. “And the Lamb is the light thereof.” Christ the Light of Heaven; that is a truth which, whatever else this Scripture expresses, is certainly expressed in it in the most vivid and emphatic manner.

We are accustomed to speak of whatever makes any portion of our life pleasant to us, as its light. The light of our childhood, was it not for most of us, the face of the dear mother whose love and patience was the very sunshine in which we grew and by which alone we seemed to live? The light of our home; was it not the wife or the child whose presence there made all things radiant, and whose departure from us cast all things into cloudiness and eclipse? The light on some pathway of labor, was it not the great hope of an honorable and useful success; the zeal of a self-denying consecration to another's good, which shone like a sunbeam on every step of that pathway, however dusty and long?

Ah, yes! we all know perfectly, by a manifold variety of familiar experiences, what the Lamp of any abode, the Light of any portion of life is!

And putting this utterance of Revelation on the very lowest footing on which it can stand, it sets forth this fact, surely, that the brightness and blessedness of heaven is the presence and manifestation of Christ. He is the centre of its pleasantness: “The lamp thereof is the Lamb.”

Now, my friends, although the full realization of this fact is something we shall have to wait for till we get over there, yet we have not to get there to know something of it. There are things already known which may teach us that it must be so. Far on this side of the shining walls and the doors of pearl,—while yet we tread this old earth which bears so many a mark of sin and suffering,—we may begin to see, and see very clearly, too, that in that City to which we go, “the Lamb is the light thereof.”

I ask you to notice that one thing which gives us this assurance, even apart from this sweet declaration of Holy Writ, is the fact that of about all of whatever is best we see around us in the world even now, it may be said, “the Lamp thereof is the Lamb.”

Take for example the Christian Church. Probably we should all agree that one of the most benign institutions, regarded on the very lowest theory of its origin or its authority, which has ever existed among men, is the institution known as the Church. It is a confederacy existing in many lands and in many forms. In outward aspect, and, to a considerable extent, in its inward ordering and action, it is various and diverse. What a history it has been, the history of the Christian Church! The Christian Church was twelve men sitting round a table in an upper chamber. The Christian Church was three thousand men pricked to the heart, and baptized on the day of Pentecost. The Church was the congregation and elders at Jerusalem. The Church was the household of Priscilla and Aquila at Rome. The Church hid itself in subterranean catacombs; the Church ruled from the throne of the Cæsars; the Church said, “Lord teach us to pray,”

and learned, like a child, the formula: "Our Father which art in heaven": but, taught also of the Spirit, the Church framed the Apostles' Creed, and wrote it in a hundred languages, and lifted up its voice in the majestic confessions of Nicæa, and Chalcedon, and Trent, and Augsburg, and Heidelberg, and Dort, and Westminster, and Savoy. The Church worshiped once in the house of a soldier at Cæsarea; it worshiped often in caves and dens of the earth; it worships still in little cabins of turf or logs on frontier missionary outposts of our own and of other lands; but it worships also, and has for century after century, in the costliest edifices which human hands have ever built; and the architectural habitations of its prayers have been made the chief wonders of the world.

Watching in behalf of individual souls, the Church has reproved the erring, comforted the sorrowing, spoken peace to the penitent, cheered the departing, buried the dead. Rising to the height of her collective charge, the Church has instituted missions for the christianization of nations, and put the sayings of the prophet of Nazareth into the mother-speech of almost every tribe that wears the shape of man. How various; how diverse; how multiform a thing, the Christian Church!

But of it all, what has been the Light? Whether looked at in the narrowest arena of its being,—as in the twelve of the upper chamber, or the "two or three" of the fulfilled promise met together in some Scotch cave of the covenanters or mining camp of Dakota; or regarded in the hour of some great jubilee when the vast cathedral trembles with Christmas or with Easter strains, and the crowded aisles take up the burden of

some universal confession of faith: "I believe in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting";—in either case what, what alone, and what equally, is the light thereof? The light of it is the Lamb! It is just the realized presence and power of the Christ of human redemption, which gives all the joy, nay, all the significance, to the whole. Take Him away and the light has fled. The Church, with all its ministers, creeds, and buildings, is but the lantern through which He shines. Take out the lamp, which is the Christ, and you have left only a dull framework, whose use has utterly departed. Not a soul of man could such a vacated lantern guide amid the bogs and pitfalls of this sinning world. Not a glint across the dark river, except, within, there shines the Light of the Lamb.

When we speak, therefore, of the Church, with reverence for its history and gratitude for its work,—and well may we speak of it thus,—let us remember always, that what makes it thus an object of love and loyalty is the Christ who is its light. From Him comes its value. All its winsomeness and preciousness is His own. The lamp of it is the Lamb.

Similarly is it,—though I have not time to draw the matter out in any detail,—in respect to that whole grand movement pre-eminently characteristic of our age of the world, which expresses itself in the manifold forms of organized philanthropy. This might well be called the Hospital period of mankind, or the Orphan Asylum period, or the Emancipation period, or the Free Education period, or the Compassion-for-

the-Poor period, were it not that no single name, however comprehensive, can express all the various aspects of its many-handed philanthropy. We live in a time, brightened, as no previous time the world has known has ever been brightened, by the zealous and combined endeavors of thousands to lessen human woe and to enlarge human welfare. This is the Lamp of this age. The very Light of the period in which we live, is this benign and radiant feature of it. It is not that this is the age of railroads, and telegraphs, and electric lights, and of floating palaces that throb from shore to shore, with almost the regularity of pendulum beats, across the Atlantic seas, that is the most eminent distinction of our time. That primal distinction is that it is an age of organized philanthropy.

But of this feature of our time,—the most lovely thing in it,—what is the central light? Of this brightness what is the kindling flame? The figure of Him who walked Galilee's ways comforting the troubled, healing the sick, and opening the eyes of the blind, is again passing before us. In the person of those whom His example inspires, He is with us in a new appearing. Of all these manifold manifestations of human brotherliness, and Christ-like sympathy of man with man, it is only the literal truth to say: "The Lamb is the light thereof."

But, turning from these outward matters, I ask you to notice a more inward one, which shows even more plainly still how it can be, nay, how it must be, that Christ is the Light of Heaven. The thing which teaches us this fact is this:—Christ is the Light of whatever is best in personal experience.

The best experiences of these personal lives of ours,—

what are they? I am not about to disparage, my friends, those great interests of our human histories which fill so large a place in the lives of each one of us, and which relate to the successes, the hopes, the joys, and the gains of this busy world. Not one word of depreciation am I to speak of the pleasantness of consciously merited applause; of the satisfaction of honestly acquired wealth; of the delight of realized ambition; or the zest of large and scholarlike intelligence. Not a word in depreciation of youth's jocund hours of buoyant health, and eager anticipation. Especially, not a word do I suggest in derogation of those best experiences of life, which grow out of the sacred relationship of home, — the love of parents; the sweet companionship of brothers and sisters; the unity of marriage; the mysterious wonder of fatherhood and motherhood; the love and watch of infancy; the joy and care of lives that would not have been but for your own.

Of all these experiences, which reach deep into the soul, and which,—some of them,—take hold on about the best there is of us, too, I have nothing to say, but in recognition of the reality of them all, and of the profound significance and worthiness of many of them as well. How close to us do they some of them come! Into what depths of intensest emotion do they lead us often! A man who has had the blessing of an honored father and a gentle mother; who has had a loving wife and filial children; who has had a reasonable share of success in affairs, and is able, intelligently, to read the books of Nature and of Man, has tasted about as sweet a cup as this world can offer; and, if having them, he has lost them, about as bitter.

But close, keen, deep, and sweet as any of these experiences are, sweeter, deeper, keener, closer to the soul, is another experience possible to all, and actual to thousands. It is the experience of Christ's forgiving love. It is the assurance which comes to a soul convinced of sin, that its sin is washed away ; the confidence that comes to a soul filled with the sense of need, that all its needs can be supplied ; the gladness of a friendless spirit that it has a Friend who will forsake it never ; the peace of one harassed by burdened memory and foreboding anticipation, at rest, now, in a Saviour's embrace.

Ah, yes ! we touch an experience here, which makes all others comparatively of small scope and importance. The realization of Christ as a personal possession and an eternal Life in the soul, is a Light by which all else grows dim. When this Light shines there is not much which can be dark. If the Lamp of one's life, as he journeys onward, is the Lamb, he may go through a very darksome pathway, and yet keep a firm and forward-looking road. The presence of Christ can dispense with a great part of what the world calls "needful" beside. If He is in the soul, He makes up for a hundred losses otherwise hard to bear. Sickness is less difficult to endure, bereavement is easier sustained, loss of property or of position is not so bitter a stroke, age and decrepitude not so forlorn and sad, if the Light in which the soul sits and waits is the Light of Christ's presence. There is a true sense even here that there is "no need of the sun, neither of the moon" to lighten such a life. The sun of this world's prosperity may "be darkened" and the moon of earthly comforts may not "give her light," and the



very "stars" of things familiar and seeming necessary, may "be shaken," but substantial quietude and welfare cannot be taken away from the life, when the Lamb is the Light thereof.

Now, my friends, if these things are true,—and that they are true is witnessed to by the experience of some of you before me,—if these things are true of this realm of the temporal, where we now dwell, so far off from the heaven where He dwells, how certainly and in how much fuller a measure must they be true of that place where He gathers His own, in His very presence, and where they see Him face to face. If now, and in this alien clime, Christ can be so much the Lamp of one's being, not strange is it that there they have "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to lighten it," for the "glory of God" is its brightness, "and the Lamb is the Light thereof." Whatever else there may be there of things answering to the Apostle's vision of the golden floors, and the pearly gates, and the walls of precious stones, and the river from out the throne, and the tree of life with its healing leaves, and the eyes in which there are no tears, and the day which has no night, sure are we that the central fact of that home of blessedness is the realized presence and friendship of Christ; and that the best thing we can possibly know of the life we enter there, is this, that the "Lamp thereof is the Lamb."

A natural, and I think a practical, suggestion now arises that may well have its effect not only on a good deal of the language that we use, but an effect, also, on the conduct of life. We all want to "go to heaven," as we say. We all speak of heaven as an object of forecast and desire. Very well. It is a good desire.



It is told of the worthies of Old Testament history as a very distinguishing feature of their experience and a very auspicious trait of their character, that they desired the same thing. These all desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly," looked for it, greeted it from afar, and "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Very well! If we are wise we shall do like them. We shall cultivate this same longing for a country which is "better"; and a "city which hath foundations" that never will be removed.

But, let us remember that we can not merely go to heaven, we can bring heaven to us. The characteristic feature of that place is that the light of it is the realized presence and friendship of Christ; and that is an experience which can be translated into and made a part of our present lives.

The most distinctive thing about heaven may become a very distinctive thing about earth. The light in which we expect to walk may be the light in which we now walk. To an extent increasingly, and almost without boundary, large, we may make the present life a counterpart of the life to come. We may fit ourselves here for that; nay, we may do vastly more than that, we may practice ourselves in it. We may make it simply impossible that we land anywhere else at last, than in that place for which we are fitted, by longing, by assimilation, by conformity, by anticipatory, but real, experience. Things go where they belong. Men go to their "own place." The Christian soul gravitates to heaven, as a pebble gravitates to the earth's center.

And if we learn thus how to bring heaven to us by

making the Lamp of our lives the Lamb, we shall get a good deal of clearness on the best way to bless and help this troubled world. O, the foolish and crazy methods men sometimes try,—even earnest and well-wishing men,—in the endeavor to right human wrong and uplift human depression! There is nothing in the scope of all this universe which can so uplift a down-trodden soul, and so right the wrongs of an injured one, as to bring Christ into contact with it. The true adjustment of the relations of man to man, of capital to labor, of wealth to poverty; in short, the true redress of all the disorders of society, attends on the fuller illumination of these problems, not so much by statesmanship as by Christianity, the study and treatment of them in the light of the example and the spirit of Christ. As fellow-workers in this blessed enterprise, let us come to the fountain both of knowledge and of power! We shall work better for our fellow-men in proportion as we ourselves are filled with the life of the Master. For our own sakes, for the sake of the men whom we would help to better things here and to come, let us seek to have it more and more true of the lives we live, that “the Light thereof is the Lamb.”

v.

Dr. Lyman's Tribute at the Unveiling of a Com-  
memorative Tablet in the First Church,  
Hartford, January 13, 1901.



*From the Hartford Courant of January 14, 1901:—*

Tablets were unveiled at the First Church yesterday morning in memory of Rev. Dr. George Leon Walker and Rev. Dr. Charles M. Lamson, former pastors of the church, both of whom are now dead. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Albert J. Lyman of Brooklyn. He took for his text 1 Corinthians iii: 5, 6, and 8: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one."

The preacher set forth with great clearness and wealth of illustration the central thought of the text, that the vital heart and effective power in the church and its ministry is of God rather than of man. The minister is the agent of a higher spiritual energy than his own. In the temple, under which figure the Church is symbolized, the shaping force from foundation to final is the spirit of Christ. In the army, by which type the Church is set forth, Christ is the real captain. In the tilled field, to which the apostle compares the Church in the text, Paul and Apollos are only husbandmen, while the "increase" is of God.

Dr. Lyman then said:—

We render to-day a tribute to rare human genius. Our eyes are wet as we recall the finished charm of pastoral devotion, but above the genius and within the

devotion we see the face and feel the touch of the Son of God. And yet all the more because Christ so ordained the succession of these ministries, we do well to honor them, to commemorate them, to crown those living yonder, whom we sometimes call the dead. We realize with a nameless thrill that the very power of the Living Christ, invisible and immortal, was upon them, and is among us still. We breathe the fragrance of blooms that cannot fade. We feel the might of ardors that cannot die.

By the pious and reverent affection of this church and of personal friends, two tablets of bronze have been prepared and are now offered and placed upon the walls of this historic sanctuary, bearing the names and inscribed to the honor of two pastors who, in succession, served this church, the former for thirteen active years, the latter for five; so that ever your eyes and those of your children shall see before them here the revered and beloved names of George Leon Walker and Charles Marion Lamson.

The nature of this occasion and its limitation of time do not permit minute analysis of the record of the two remarkable men whose life is thus outlined. But both justice and love command that some word should be spoken. May the present speaker set formalities aside and out of his own heart lay his poor sprig of laurel upon these tablets to-day.

Dr. Walker was my senior by fifteen years, Dr. Lamson but two years older than myself. Dr. Walker was the inspirer of my first efforts as a preacher when he was pastor of the Center Church at New Haven, and I a resident licentiate at the Divinity School. It was he whose worn, tense, masterful face looked cour-

age into my timid eyes when I tried my boyish first sermon in his great pulpit.

Dr. Walker, great-grandson of a Revolutionary soldier, eighth in descent from Richard Walker who settled at Lynn, Mass., and fought in the early Indian wars, was himself martial to the core—a soldier of the Truth and of Faith, a true knight of God. Born to physical disability and pain, he was also born to spiritual dauntlessness in spite of pain. He was a student who steadily and victoriously measured his strength of will against the bayonet's blade of insistent disease. Weakened in frame, half blinded for a time by typhoid fever, he climbed on his crutches the Mount Sion of his vocation. A braver soul never breathed the New England air. Just such a type of moral valor could have been produced nowhere but in New England. A sufferer always, yet always a wrestler, and always a conqueror, the pain and the power over pain both entered, like a kind of mingled iron and fire, into the very texture of his thinking, driving all weakness out, burning all dross away—entered into his personal attitude, his pulpit manner and message, entered into his extraordinary mastery of vivid and sinewy phrase. One looked at him as at no other man, reverently, through tears.

cannot but regard him as one of the great pulpit stylists of his time, though his style, as a minister's should be, was more for the whole man in spoken utterance, than for the merely written page, and I can imagine the half-stern, half-smiling way in which he would put aside all such comment upon style, when he simply felt himself to be standing between Sinai and Calvary to speak to the people. But the union in him

of an intense, ancestral piety, and a classic sense of perfection in literary form, together with this incessant lash of suffering, and the heroic moral clench that conquers suffering, produced a unique and vital energy in expression, a strange fascination, an indescribably subduing note which I have never heard elsewhere, which sought out your very soul's core and mastered you and won you before you were aware.

With less of pain, there might have been more of leisurely speculative range, certainly more of buoyancy, but also probably less of spiritual vitality and subtle, half-unearthly pathos. He came into New England and the New England ministry by way of Horeb, the Mount of God, and Gethsemane, the garden of tears and the angels. One could not look at him and not think of the Ten Commandments and the Eternal Throne. When he spoke, you waited in spite of yourself for some Sinaitic flash, and sooner or later it came. He spoke his soul. I thought of him as of a moving pillar, with something of the cloud by day and the fire by night—a living incarnation, beyond almost any other man I ever knew, of the reality and the mastery of the Unseen.

You know his public service. Independent, cogent, keen, and strong, he exerted a most powerful influence upon current and critical discussions in our denominational life. He loved the heart of orthodoxy, yet loved the freedom which alone gave to orthodoxy its ethical value. He was a power in the church and in the land. He was a wise counsellor as well as public leader, touching nothing but to clarify it and strengthen it. He was a very careful student, a lover of letters, a lover of history. Through his local historical studies



and monographs, he became identified more and more with Hartford.

When he came to this church he instantly comprehended and mastered a critical and somewhat perilous situation. He created a fresh alignment of church and civil forces, launched the society upon a renewed career, kindled a light in this pulpit which shone like a torch, far and wide, and furthered renovations and works of improvement in the neighboring environment, which, largely through the instrumentality of the devoted hands of the women of the church and the city, have been carried to a beautiful and complete fulfillment.

At length, in June of '92, he was forced by stress of ill health to resign his pastoral charge. He was at once, by spontaneous insistence of church and society, made pastor emeritus. In '96 came the stroke which left his body helpless, but could no more touch the glowing and dauntless soul than the frost at the rim of the fountain touches the springing splendor of the fountain's jet.

New England has never seen a more nobly pathetic picture than the emeritus pastorate of Dr. Walker. Embosomed in a home devoted to him, in the midst of a church and city that revered him, this gallant hero of the Living God, deprived largely of physical power, yet kept alive his eager and loving interest in his people and in the interests of the Kingdom of Christ on earth, and with his strange inner spiritual fire all uncooled, waited for death as for an old servant whom in other days he had resolutely bidden to bide his time until sunset, till his master's work was fully finished. Then came the sunset gun, and this valiant knight of

the New England pulpit smiled across and said his  
 “*adsum*” and was ready.

“Nothing is here for tears,  
 Nothing to wail, to knock the breast,  
 No weakness, no contempt, dispraise or blame;  
 Nothing but well and fair,  
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.”

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*The Tablet.*

TO THE MEMORY OF  
 GEORGE LEON WALKER, D.D.,  
 BORN 1830 — DIED 1900.  
 ORDAINED TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY  
 1858.  
 PASTOR OF THE  
 STATE STREET CHURCH, PORTLAND, ME.,  
 1858—1867.  
 PASTOR OF THE  
 FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, NEW HAVEN, CONN..  
 1868—1873.  
 ACTING PASTOR OF THE  
 CENTER CHURCH, BRATTLEBORO, VT.,  
 1875—1878.  
 PASTOR OF THE  
 FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, HARTFORD, CONN.,  
 1879—1892.  
 PASTOR EMERITUS  
 FROM 1892 UNTIL THE DAY OF HIS DEATH.  
 A SCHOLAR AMONG STUDENTS.  
 A COUNSELOR AMONG FRIENDS.  
 A LEADER AMONG ASSOCIATES.  
 A PREACHER OF COMMANDING POWER.  
 A CHRISTIAN OF CONSPICUOUS LIFE.  
 THIS TABLET IS PLACED BY THE PEOPLE OF  
 THIS CHURCH  
 WHOM HE SERVED AND BY WHOM HE WAS  
 REVERED.

VI.

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